# AFTER THE BATTLE

# THE BATTLE OF THE MONS POCKET

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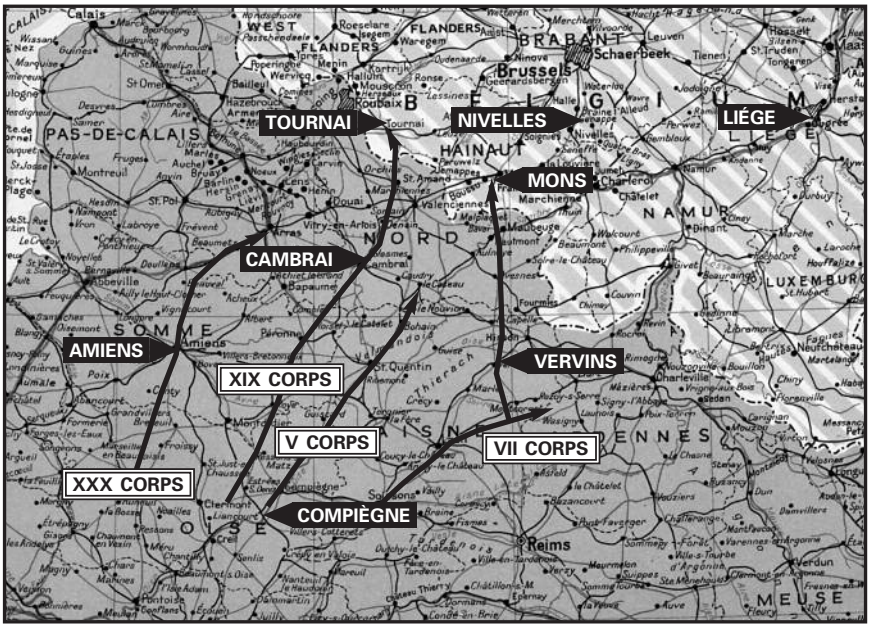
**Front cover:** The scene in Aubencheul-au-Bac on the morning of September 2, 1944 with US armour driving northwards past shot-up German transport (see page 9). (Jean Paul Pallud)

**Centre pages:** In 1946 an M5 light tank nicknamed *Fish and Chips* was offered to the city of Mons by the Americans and put on display in the Mayor's garden as a liberation memorial. Restored by the Mons Jeep Club in 1984, it became the star of the liberation parade organised annually on the Sunday nearest to September 2. The tour always ends retracing the route of the 3rd Armored's CCA through Nouvelles, Mesvin and Hyon to enter Mons via the Avenue Reine Astrid. (Yves Bourdon)

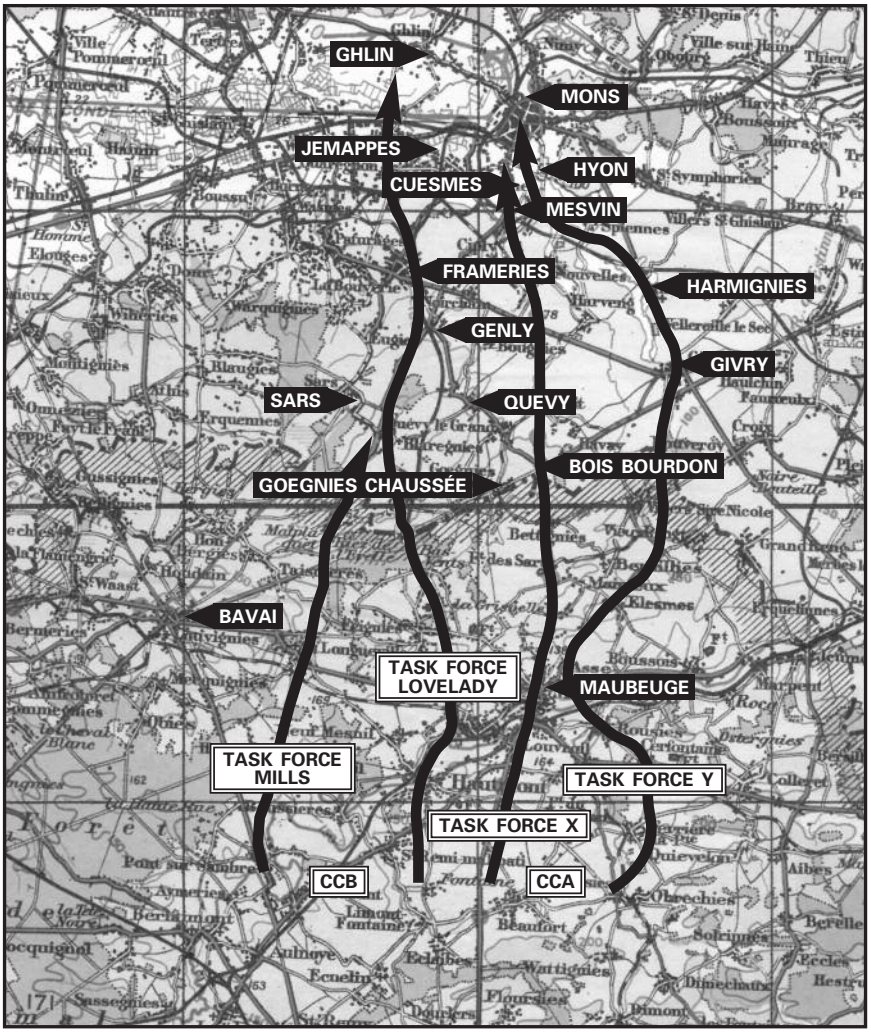
**Back cover:** Winston Ramsey, Editor-in-Chief: 'When we sponsored the memorial at RAF North Weald, it had to be designed to complement the Norwegian obelisk already in place since 1952. Also I wanted visitors to be able to take away a tangible reminder so we compiled a Debt of Honour listing the names of all those who had lost their lives while serving at the airfield. It has been very encouraging to see the interest shown, particularly by the younger generation, and I hope it will give a better insight as to the true meaning of the memorial.'


**Acknowledgements:** The Editor and Jean Paul Pallud would like to thank Yves Bourdon and Maurice Toubeau for enthusiastic support with the Battle of the Mons Pocket story. As co-authors of the book *La Poche de Mons*, they provided many photographs from their collection and these are credited in the captions as (YB/MB). Our appreciation is also extended to Jean-Louis Roba who took some of the comparison photographs.

**Photo Credits:** CWGC — Commonwealth War Graves Commission


**On August 31, 1944 to sever the German escape routes eastwards, General Omar Bradley turned the US First Army to the north. On the army left wing, though the town was within the zone of operations of the British 21st Army Group (British XXX Corps), XIX Corps was directed to take Tournai. In the centre, V Corps was to cut the Lille-Brussels highway at Leuze and on the right VII Corps was to take Mons. This was the situation on the evening of September 2.**




**The 3rd Armored Division drive on Mons on September 2. By evening, Task Force Lovelady of Combat Command B was at Ghlin with Task Force Mills well to the rear near Sars. The two task forces of Combat Command A were at the southern entrance to Mons. (Not shown is CCR which was to the south near Harveng and Givry.)**

# THE BATTLE OF THE MONS POCKET

## By Jean Paul Pallud

In the first days of September 1944, the US First Army surrounded a large force of fleeing German troops in a pocket located around and south of the Belgian border town of Mons — the very battlefield of the first great battle of World War I. Neither the Americans nor the Germans expected it to happen as it did, but Mons developed into a very costly battle for the Wehrmacht. In a matter of three days, the Americans annihilated the pocket, destroying masses of vehicles and matériel and capturing

*Top and above:* **By September 1, 1944, all German hopes of holding the Allies at the Somme-Marne river line in France had been shattered; consequently Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model, the commander of Heeresgruppe B, ordered a withdrawal to the West Wall — the line of fortifications protecting Germany's western frontier. The troops which had been extricated from Normandy and those in the Pas-de-Calais started to fall back into Belgium, toward the Schelde estuary, the Albert Canal and the Meuse river, trying to maintain an orderly withdrawal. The roads were congested and Allied air attacks were a permanent threat like here on a road south of Brussels where a convoy was caught in the open by fighter-bombers. (ECPAD France)**

**A German war photographer, Karl Müller of Propaganda-Kompanie 698, happened to be in the Belgian city of Mons in the first days of September. These pictures taken near the Place des Flandres show neither confusion nor haste although the men appear exhausted after days of continuous movement and some of them seem to have lost their weapons.** *Above:* **On the signpost in the centre of the roundabout, withdrawing units have added their own signs: Peiper (of the 1. SS-Panzer-Division), Telkamp (of the 9. SS-Panzer-Division), Holz, Kreyling, the trident of the 2. Panzer-Division. (ECPAD France)**

about 25,000 prisoners, remnants of some 20 disorganised divisions. Coming just two weeks after the Allied victory at Falaise, where 40,000 were captured (see *After the Battle* No. 8), it received little publicity even at the time, and most historians of the 1944-45 campaign have paid scant attention to it. Yet, in numbers of troops and equipment lost, Mons was the second-largest German defeat of the whole campaign in the West. The Allies would not see such mass surrenders until the very final days of the war.

The strategic background and the run-up to the battle of the Mons Pocket were aptly described by US Army historian Martin Blumenson in *Breakout and Pursuit*, the volume of the US Army's official history dealing with the battle for France:

'At the end of August 1944 the Allied armies were like knights of old who set out in quest of the Holy Grail but were not averse to slaying dragons and rescuing damsels in distress along the way. The Allies desired the Channel ports to assuage their logistical aches; the Pas-de-Calais coastal area to neutralise the German V-weapons; the liberation of north-west France, Belgium, and the Netherlands; and the destruction of the enemy forces remaining between the Seine and Germany. But their fundamental objective was the Rhine river.

'Some Allied commanders believed that an immediate crossing of the Rhine would lead to quick capture of the Ruhr. The apparently disintegrating German military organisation then would collapse and carry with it a tottering German political structure. That would be the end of the war.

'Threatened also by the Soviet advance in the east, which had come to within 150 miles of the German border, the Germans no longer seemed to have sufficient forces to make a stand anywhere short of the West Wall — or Siegfried Line, as the Allies called it. A complex of permanent-type fortifications of varying strength and depth along the western frontier of Germany, the West Wall extended from the Dutch border near Kleve to Switzerland north of Basle. To the Allies, the only sound military strategy for the Germans seemed to be to rush repairs on these fortifications and immediately withdraw from France to them, using delaying action to retard the Allied advance.

'On the basis of this estimate, the overriding Allied goal became the desire to reach the Rhine before the Germans could organise an effective defence at the West Wall.

**Arriving from the west, a cart has reached Place des Flandres — a major crossroads in the south-east of the city — but the poor horse appears in the last stages of exhaustion. (ECPAD France)**

**A tunnel had now been built to cross the roundabout and all the trees that used to line Boulevard Dolez have been felled. On the other hand, most of the surrounding buildings have stood the test of time.**

**Having crossed Place des Flandres, a Zündapp combination bearing Luftwaffe personnel turns into the Boulevard d'Italie. In left background the statue of Baudouin de Constantinople stands in the middle of the roundabout. (ECPAD France)**

The West Wall was no longer the impressive shield it had once been. The Germans had neglected and partially dismantled it after their victories in 1940. They had stripped most of its armament for use at the Atlantic Wall. Its works had fallen into disrepair and no appreciable number of troops manned the line in the summer 1944. Yet the West Wall remained an important psychological barrier for both the Germans and the Allies. If the Allies could reach it before the Germans could man it (either with troops retreating from Normandy or with others already in Germany), the Allies would probably be able to get through to the Rhine with little difficulty. The pursuit east of the Seine was thus to display some of the aspects of a race.

'Though the Albert Canal and Meuse river formed a natural obstacle favourable for defence far in front of the West Wall, it hardly seemed possible that the remnants of the 7. Armee, the defeated 5. Panzerarmee, and the shrunken 15. Armee, all located in the north-west portion of France, in Belgium, and in the Netherlands, could re-establish a stable front short of the German border. Only the overstrained Allied supply lines might stop a rapid Allied advance. In the face of the glowing opportunity for continued pursuit of disorganised forces, the Allies decided to keep moving as long as possible. The armies were to "go as far as practicable", the commander of the US 12th Army Group, Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley, announced, "and then wait until the supply system in rear will permit further advance." The hope was to get at least through the West Wall to the Rhine.

'If the German high command had anything to be thankful for, as OB West staff members later recalled, it was that the Allies failed to conduct an immediate and ruthless exploitation of the Seine river crossing at Mantes-Gassicourt by an enveloping movement along the east bank of the Seine to Le Havre. That kind of manoeuvre, the Germans thought, would have led to the complete destruction of the 5. Panzerarmee and 7. Armee and would have created an irreparable gap between the 15. Armee in the north and 1. Armee in the south. The path to the north-east — to Germany — would have been undefended, and further resistance in France would have been futile. Since the Allies had not elected this course, the Germans continued to fall back toward the Schelde estuary, the Albert Canal, and the Meuse river, trying to maintain a fairly orderly withdrawal in the hope that a continuous front might be re-established there. The ports of Calais, Boulogne, and Dunkerque, about to be isolated, were to be held in compliance with Hitler's fortress policy directed against Allied logistics.

'If the Germans could maintain a defensive line at the Schelde, Albert, and Meuse, they would retain the Netherlands and its naval bases, air warning service, and food and war production; they would deny the

*Left:* **Two hundred metres or so further on, Müller pictured these men pushing their transport which was seemingly out of gas for its generator. (ECPAD France)** *Right:* **The tunnel which has been dug to cross Place des Flandres emerges on this same street (off the picture to the left), now renamed Boulevard Fulgence Masson. The statue of Baudouin has disappeared from the roundabout as it has been moved some 50 metres behind the building on the right.**

**Karl Müller pictured soldiers from the Heer (Army); others of the Waffen-SS; lorries carrying paratroopers; horse-drawn wagons; men on bicycles; on motorcycles; and on foot. Many were minus their small arms, unlike these grenadiers who still retain their rifles and personal kit. The youngster appears to be utterly indifferent to the sight of the German convoys incessantly passing by. (ECPAD France)**

**A hospital has since been built on Rue du Gouvernement on the corner of Place des Flandres (note the ambulance in the comparison on page 5) and the characteristic brick wall has disappeared. New buildings and trees now hide the house on the right in the picture above but it is still there.**

Allies the port of Antwerp, preserve the territorial integrity of Germany, and protect the Saar and the Ruhr. Most important, they would gain time to repair and re-arm the West Wall.

'The troops extricated from Normandy west of the Seine and those in the Pas-de-Calais tried to maintain a cohesive front close to the northern coast of France. Screening their landward flank with mobile units, they hoped by delaying action to blunt Allied spearheads thrusting into that flank and thereby to gain time to reach the Schelde—Albert—Meuse line. German commanders insisted that the Allied pursuit was hesitant and that orderly resistance could be successful despite inferiority in strength and resources. Yet congested roads, traffic bottlenecks, an insufficient number of bridges and ferries, the fatigue of continuous movement, Allied strafing from the air, and the lack of information on the general situation created a depressing feeling of defeat.

'Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model, the commander of Heeresgruppe B, was no longer master of his army group situation. With hope of holding at the Somme-Marne river line shattered, he found himself issuing futile orders that were out of date before the disorganised units received them. The 15. Armee, in precarious command of the Channel ports, was in danger of being cut off and isolated. The 5. Panzerarmee, which had moved inland to take command of the bulk of the remaining armour, was unable to hold around Soissons. The 7. Armee had scarcely begun to resurrect its ghost divisions at the Somme when it lost its commander, General der Panzertruppen Heinrich Eberbach, who was taken prisoner on August 31. Unable to form a cohesive battle line, Model by September 1 saw no course open except withdrawal to the West Wall. The Germans had been routed and whatever resistance occurred was to a large extent the product of individual initiative on the lower echelons.

'Whether the Germans in north-west France could withdraw more quickly than the Allies could advance was the important question. To the Allies, the answer seemed negative on the basis of comparative motorisation alone. More precise indications were also available. The XIX Corps on the US First Army left seemed to have outraced enemy forces that were apparently moving eastward in an attempt to block the Allied pursuit. Various Resistance groups in northern France were of the opinion that the Germans did not have enough men, matériel, and mobility to establish and hold a strong defensive line anywhere short of the West Wall. Despite weather conditions that prevented extensive air reconnaissance during the last days of August, Allied pilots noted

*Left:* **And the parade goes on! On Boulevard d'Italie, paratroopers push on eastwards while a careful look-out is kept for potential ambushes by the Resistance. (ECPAD France)** *Right:* **There were about 20 men on this SdKfz 10 prime mover and all seem to have lost their weapons in the hectic moves of the last days. Only one man is armed: a soldier of the Waffen-SS who appears to be 'riding shotgun' with his MG42. In the background, Place des Flandres. (ECPAD France)**

**Thirty kilometres south of Brussels, Nivelles was a major focus of the road network and many German convoys converged there on their way east.** *Left:* **Müller, possibly riding with the retreating troops, took this picture of the same convoy that we have already seen on page 3. The damage to the roof of the Collégiale had still not been repaired following the German raids in 1940. (ECPAD France)** *Right:* **Post-war rebuilding has transformed this stretch of the Rue de Namur.**

**From his studio on Place Emile Lalieux, a local photographer, M. Octave Sanspoux, took these snapshots of the stream of vehicles leaving Nivelles.** *Left:* **An SdKfz 251/1 half-track arrives from Rue de Namur followed** *(right)* **by an Opel Blitz truck.**

large German groups in various stages of disorganisation drifting east and north-east across the US First Army front — more than 100 enemy armoured vehicles near Saint-Quentin, more than 300 miscellaneous vehicles clogging the road net north-east of Amiens. By September 1 only a few German tanks remained on the Second British Army front.

**This corner of Nivelles is timeless and the shop from where M. Sanspoux took these pictures still stands. This spot is only a little way from where Müller took the picture at the top of this page so he certainly must have passed by here as well.**

'Recognising that the Germans could hope to organise resistance only at the Albert-Meuse line, General Bradley temporarily shifted his sights from the Rhine river in favour of a manoeuvre to block the German retreat and eliminate the major part of the German forces in France. To accomplish this, Bradley decided to turn Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges' US First Army from a north-easterly direction to the north. Hodges' troops, by racing across the Franco-Belgian border to cut the Lille-Brussels highway, might sever the escape routes of approximately two panzer and eight to ten infantry divisions that appeared to be west of a north-south line from Laon to Mons, Belgium.

'This projected advance resembled the third envelopment that earlier Lieutenant General George S. Patton, the commander of the US Third Army, had tentatively planned east of the Seine. In effect the manoeuvre would reinstate the earlier boundary line that had been drawn by the commander of the British 21st Army Group, General Bernard L. Montgomery, and then changed at Bradley's request. At the conclusion of its northward drive, the US First Army would have compressed the British and Canadians into a narrow zone ending at the Schelde estuary. The British and Canadians would

*Left:* **In Tongeren, 15 kilometres north of Liège, another Belgian photographer took pictures of the retreat from a window overlooking the Grand Place as people watch the passage of horse-drawn wagonry in front of Notre Dame cathedral. (US Army)** *Right:* **Unfortunately new buildings preclude taking an exact comparison.**

then be facing out toward the sea. Apparently without consulting higher headquarters, General Bradley ordered General Hodges to execute the manoeuvre.

'The most important objective of the shift in direction was the city of Tournai, Belgium, and during the afternoon of August 31 the First Army G3, Brigadier General Truman C. Thorson, arrived at Major General Charles H. Corlett's XIX Corps headquarters to outline the new plan. Instead of driving through Montdidier and Péronne and turning gently eastward toward Mons, Corlett was to go north beyond Péronne to Tournai, 100 miles ahead of the corps' leading units, and then north to Ghent, 40 miles farther. The immediate objective, Tournai, was to be taken within 48 hours — at the latest by midnight, September 2.

'The precise deadline for reaching Tournai reflected additional motives. General Bradley thought that the British would advance less rapidly than the Americans and that the Germans holding Tournai would consequently constitute a threat to the First Army left flank. More important, an airborne operation ('Linnet I') was scheduled to take place at Tournai against General Bradley's wishes. Bradley had consistently opposed the use of airborne troops during the pursuit because he believed that ground forces alone could gain distant objectives and because he felt that available aircraft would be better employed to bring supplies to the ground units rather than to transport airborne troops. Overruled by the Allied Supreme Commander, General Dwight D.

**From Nivelles, Karl Müller proceeded eastwards, taking en route the two photos seen on page 3 before he arrived in Tongeren. There, he pictured this medical convoy in front of the cathedral. The statue is that of Ambiorix — a local Gallic leader who fought against Caesar's armies.**

**Large numbers of German troops made good their escape before the pincers finally closed around Mons. Many were from the I. SS-Panzerkorps, on the 5. Panzerarmee's left wing which was already east of the American northward axis of advance. Others were from the LVIII. Panzerkorps and II. SS-Panzerkorps which had managed to slip in between the American task forces. Among them were sizeable battle groups from the 9. SS-Panzer-Division and 10. SS-Panzer-Division and these started to assemble in the Maastricht sector from September 3. Here men of the latter division hand out delicacies to local children. (ECPAD France)**

**Leading the US XIX Corps drive north, the 2nd Armored Division crossed the Somme early on September 1, reaching Cambrai by evening. During the night, Company D of the 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion reached Aubencheul-au-Bac, 12 kilometres to the north, and captured the bridge over the canal intact. American tankers shot up any German vehicles that tried to cross over and the following morning this burning half-track remained at the southern entrance to the village. (US Army)**

Eisenhower, Bradley had warned that ground units would secure the Tournai drop zones before airborne troops could land there. To insure the correctness of his prediction, he ordered General Hodges to get the XIX Corps to Tournai despite the fact that Tournai was within the British army zone.

'General Hodges was under another impression. He thought that the reason why Bradley wanted additional speed on the different axis was his desire to link up with the paratroopers scheduled to drop on September 3.

'To get to the Belgian border in the short time allowed, Corlett used all his available trucks, chiefly of artillery and anti-aircraft units, to motorise two regiments of the 79th Division and one of the 30th — this in addition to the organic transportation that enabled each infantry division to motorise one regimental combat team. With the 2nd Armored Division leading two almost completely motorised infantry divisions, the XIX Corps set forth to bypass resistance and make night marches if necessary in order to reach Tournai at the appointed hour. "Get a good night's sleep and don't worry", the 2nd Armored commander, Major General Edward H. Brooks, advised Corlett, "It's in the bag." Nearby, the excited corps chief-of-staff exclaimed, "Hot pursuit!"

'Combat Command A (CCA) of the 2nd Armored Division crossed the Somme early on September 1 after bypassing a pocket of resistance at Montdidier, which the 79th Division soon eliminated, and on September 2 — two hours before the midnight deadline — reached Tournai. While a regiment of the 30th Division took the city, both infantry divisions assembled in the objective area around midnight. Combat Command B (CCB) arrived after a two-and-a-half hour engagement with an enemy column that resulted in the destruction of 96 German vehicles and 28 guns. Combat Command Reserve (CCR) had just enough gasoline to reach the objective but instead assembled about ten miles short of it to keep a small supply of fuel on hand for emergencies. Except for these two instances of resistance, the corps had advanced against only the faintest kind of opposition. Even destroyed bridges had failed to slow the rate of advance. In keeping with procedure that had become standard, engineers laid a treadway bridge first, then built a Bailey bridge nearby. When the Bailey was completed, the traffic was diverted to it, and the treadway was pulled up for the next crossing.

'American incursion into the British zone had begun to look like a habit, and one of General Montgomery's aides visited Corlett on the afternoon of September 2 to protest. Montgomery wanted XIX Corps halted short of Tournai so that American troops would not interfere with the British advance, but it was too late to stop the columns. When Hodges informed Corlett later in the evening that a change in plans made a halt necessary, the leading troops were virtually on the objective.

'The XIX Corps halted at Tournai, as much because the units were out of petrol as because of orders. While British troops, who had reached the vicinity of Tournai shortly

**Further down the road, Shermans of the 66th Armored Regiment thunder past those who have turned out to greet the Americans. A dead German lies at the roadside. (US Army)**

**Aubencheul-au-Bac, from then . . . to now. The orderly peace and quiet of a summer's day in 2001 contrasts with the hectic events of September 1944.**

*Left:* **At 9.30 a.m. on September 2, men of the 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Armored Division, crossed the Belgian border near Rumes, ten kilometres to the south-west of Tournai, thus becoming the first Allied soldiers to enter Belgium. These M5 light tanks were pictured later that day, moving through Saint-Amand, eight kilometres from the border, where crowds gathered on the Grand Place to cheer them on. (US Army)** *Right:* **Most of the buildings surrounding the square in 1944 still stand today and Jean Paul managed to gain access to the same window on the first floor of the house on the corner.**

**At Rongy, the first village across the border, the population turned out to cheer the Americans. This M8 armoured car belonged to the 113th Cavalry Group, the reconnaissance unit attached to XIX Corps. (US Army)**

**We discovered that the picture had been taken in Rue de Ponceau.**

after the Americans, swept beyond, XIX Corps processed a disappointing total of only 1,300 prisoners. A small captured barge loaded with German petrol enabled reconnaissance units to mop up the area. Meanwhile, Corlett waited for further instructions and fuel supplies.

'The Tournai airborne operation had in the meantime been cancelled. Awakened at daybreak on September 3 by a complaint from General Montgomery that American troops were blocking the roads at Tournai, Bradley was satisfied that they also blocked the airborne drop. General Eisenhower had tentatively decided on September 2 to cancel the operation on the announced theory that the purpose of the drop — to bar German escape routes to the east — had been achieved by ground action. After conferring with Montgomery, the Supreme Commander confirmed his decision. In the meantime, the commander of the First Allied Airborne Army, Lieutenant General Lewis H. Brereton, had announced poor weather conditions as the official reason for cancelling the drop.

'Like XIX Corps, US V Corps had received instructions to advance north. It was to cut the Lille-Brussels highway at Leuze (ten miles east of Tournai) and Ath. Using artillery, tank destroyer, anti-aircraft, and engineer transportation facilities, Major General Leonard T. Gerow formed provisional truck companies to motorise his infantry. With the 4th Division, reinforced by a 5th Armored Division combat command, in the lead, and the remainder of the armour and the 28th Division following, V Corps accelerated its pace on the evening of August 31. The corps advanced continuously until the morning of September 2 when, in the vicinity of Landrecies, about 20 miles short of the border, most of the units ran out of petrol. Gerow received word from Hodges later in the day to remain on the Cambrai-Landrecies line, but his order to halt did not reach all the elements of the 5th Armored Division. By afternoon of the 3rd, CCB was about eight miles south of Leuze and its reconnaissance elements were on the final objective. The only resistance, encountered near Landrecies, had been overcome without difficulty. Relatively few prisoners were taken.

'Although most bridges in the V Corps zone had been destroyed by the Germans, a few had been seized intact and a few had been saved by FFI (French Forces of the Interior) action. Piles of destroyed German equipment along the roads attested to the

*Left:* **The 2nd Armored Division reached Tournai at 10 p.m. on the 2nd, two hours ahead of General Bradley's deadline. It was another incursion in the British army zone and at 2.30 a.m. on the 3rd, the 2nd Armored headquarters received a diplomatically worded message from the Guards Armoured Division 'expressing hope that 2AD understands Tournai to be totally within the British zone'. The Jeep in the centre of this picture belongs to the US 113th Cavalry Group but the vehicle in front is a British Daimler armoured car. (US Army)** *Right:* **Peter Taghon matched the shot for us in the Chaussée de Douai — no easy task when the original wartime caption stated that it was taken in Couvin, over 100 kilometres to the south-east!**

accurate fire from Allied aircraft. Ground troops sometimes had to use bulldozers to clear paths through the wreckage and the dead horses, from which hungry civilians had already cut steaks.

'The US VII Corps, on the First Army right, had also received orders on August 31 to change direction. Instead of driving northeastward from Montcornet and Rethel toward Namur and Liège, Major General J. Lawton Collins was ordered to turn north and drive through the towns of Avesnes, Maubeuge, and Mons. General Collins' first concern was for the gap that would develop on the right between his corps and the US Third Army. When he asked Hodges who was to fill the gap, he learned that that was his own problem. Though Collins thought at first that he would have to leave a division behind for the purpose, he decided instead to cover the gap with the 4th Cavalry Group, reinforced by a battalion each of light tanks, motorised artillery, tank destroyers, and infantry, three engineer companies, and a platoon of a medical collecting company. Even though he had been diverted to the north to trap Germans, Collins still had his eyes fixed on the West Wall. Anxious to continue north-eastward across the Meuse, he instructed the 4th Cavalry not only to maintain contact with Patton but also to seize a Meuse bridgehead near Mézières. Meanwhile, he swerved the 3rd Armored Division — which was moving toward Sedan and Charleville — onto new roads to the north toward Hirson and Vervins. The 9th Division was to protect the right flank; the 1st Division was to come up on the left to reinforce the armour.'

**British troops also maintained the pressure on the retreating German forces, this Sherman of the 2nd Armoured Battalion, Irish Guards, being pictured on September 3 crossing the Belgian border at Rumes. (IWM)**

*Left:* **The Americans established a road-block five kilometres south of Tournai at Antoing where the crew of the same Irish Guards' Sherman were greeted by men of the 30th Infantry Division. This meeting took place about 10 a.m. on September 3. (IWM)** *Right:* **Such are the scenes of history: this is the same level crossing in Rue Philippart.**

**In the centre of the First Army, V Corps also advanced northwards until the morning of September 2 by which time most of the units were out of fuel. This Sherman is in the centre of Le Cateau on what is now Place du Général de Gaulle. (US Army)**

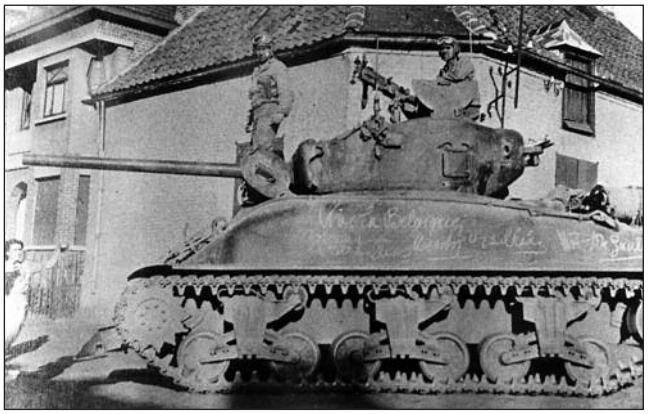
*Left:* **German prisoners assembled in Pommereuil, four kilometres east of Le Cateau. (US Army)** *Right:* **It was very difficult to trace this farm as Pommereuil was devastated by a storm in 1967 and most of the houses were demolished before being rebuilt. Nevertheless, Jean Paul recognised the wall with these typical doors and windows on an aerial view taken just after the storm and so managed to establish that the picture had been taken in the yard of M. Georges Carpentier's farm at 8 Rue du Cateau.**

*Left:* **Fighting resumed near Landrecies on the morning of September 3 to try to reduce those German forces still holding out north of the Sambre river where this Marder III tank destroyer (Panzerjäger 38 Ausf M) was knocked out. A US soldier is searching a corpse as villagers return to their homes. (US Army)** *Right:* **The picture was taken on the D959 at a crossroads at the western end of the town. The house in the background was demolished some years previous.**

**On August 31 VII Corps, on the right wing of the First Army, also changed direction and on September 1 six columns of the 3rd Armored started towards Mons. They comprised Combat Command A (Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey), Combat Command B (Colonel Truman E. Boudinot) and Combat Command R (Colonel Louis P. Leone), each of two columns. The advance was maintained all day against moderate resistance and by evening CCA was bivouacked just south of Avesnes, with CCB to its west. Resuming their drive next morning, CCA's Task Force X reached Maubeuge that afternoon.** *Above:* **At Louvroil, just south of Maubeuge, members of the FFI boarded the leading tanks to guide them through the town and across the Sambre. The Resistance had previously sabotaged the demolition charges so they knew that the bridge was intact. (US Army)** *Left:* **The picture was taken on the Rue d'Avesnes, the N2, which is the main south-north road through the town.**

**Just north of Maubeuge, Task Force X passed the Maginot line which failed to stop the Germans in 1940. US forces crossed the Belgian border here around 4 p.m. (US Army)**

**The level of the Route de Mons has since been raised and new trees hide both the Maison Rouge blockhouse and the house in the background but they are still there.**



*Left:* **On CCA's right wing, Task Force Y crossed the frontier near Givry and advanced along the main road to Mons as far as Harmignies where it turned left and set off across country. When approaching the main Maubeuge-Mons road allocated to Task Force X, the leading elements turned north again and soon reached Mesvin. This Sherman of the 32rd Armored Regiment stands at the crossroads at the point where the field track used by the task force joins the main road, the Chaussée Brunehault. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **In memory of the entry of Task Force Y, this side street in Mesvin is now named Voie Américaine.**

**These three GIs from Task Force Y, their faces caked in dust from driving in an open Jeep, stop in Mesvin to have their picture taken with enthusiastic individuals in the main street. Less than an hour before, German soldiers would have been drinking beer in the same village! (YB/MT)**

**The group picture was taken on Chaussée Brunehault about 50 metres away from the village church. When we returned to the spot, Marie-Françoise was disappointed not to find any Americans on hand to greet her with a welcoming kiss.**

Early on September 1, Major General Maurice Rose's 3rd Armored Division started towards Mons, driving due northward astride the Vervins—Avesnes—Maubeuge—Mons highway in six parallel columns. On the left was Colonel Truman E. Boudinot's Combat Command B with two task forces, one setting out from Marle and the other from Hary, six miles further east; in the centre was Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey's Combat Command A with two task forces starting out from north-east of Rozoy-sur-Serre; and on the right was Colonel Louis P. Leone's Combat Command R with two task forces moving out from Wadimont, three miles east of Rozoy.

The advance was steady against moderate resistance all day. CCB worked its way up the N2 main road through Vervins and La Capelle. On its left wing, Task Force Mills captured a German convoy and 200 prisoners at Leschelles, six miles west of La Capelle. North of that town, Task Force Lovelady fought a tough battle with German anti-tank guns and at least two Panthers, one of which was knocked out. A number of enemy columns were spotted from the air and supporting fighter-bombers called in to bomb and strafe them. By nightfall, CCB's two spearheads were at Le Favril, just short of Landrecies, and at Fontenelle, north-west of La Capelle.

The centre force, CCA, was held up for several hours by a blown bridge of the Thon river north of Landouzy, and later by a roadblock of anti-tank guns and one Tiger tank near Clairefontaine. By evening, its two task forces had reached La Capelle and Rocquigny, north-east of there.

CCR spent most of the day trying to find a crossing of the Thon river, finally building one at Bucilly, just north of Hirson. Lagging behind the other two combat commands, it bivouacked for the night in that town. The day's advance had brought the 3rd Armored forward some 30 miles. About 500 prisoners had been taken, from units of many different divisions.

During the night, CCB was cut off from its service elements, a German attack cutting the road behind it. Fuel, lubricants and other supplies had to be 'fought' forward, and this caused a delay in CCB's resuming the attack on September 2, but the other two combat commands were able to start early. Again, opposition was moderate. Only in little strong points, which consisted of a few tanks and infantry, the Germans persisted in trying to slow the American advance. Stubborn ones were bypassed by the armoured columns, leaving them to be smashed by air power.

CCB's Task Force Mills crossed the Sambre at Pont-sur-Sambre over a bridge

*Left:* **Task Force Y spent little time celebrating before pushing on northwards in the direction of Hyon. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **This is the same house in Mesvin although new trees now change the perspective of Chaussée Brunehault. In the left background stands Mont Panisel, the high ground to the south-east of Mons that was one of the objectives of Task Force Y.**

**From September 3 other units moved up in the wake of Task Force Y. The crew of this M10 tank destroyer belong to the 634th Tank Destroyer Battalion (note the 634TD marking on the bumper of the Jeep). (YB/MT)**

secured by the FFI, but German resistance on the road to Bavay forced it to switch to the east, falling in behind Task Force Lovelady. The latter force, after crossing the Sambre at Hautmont, just west of Maubeuge, and entering Belgium, shot up several German columns — especially at Blaregnies and Frameries, where their route crossed the German escape routes from Bavay to Mons, and further north at the crossroads of the Valenciennes-Mons highway. Continuing on past Jemappes and Ghlin, at 2045 hours, Task Force Lovelady reached CCB's objective, the high ground west of Mons. CCB's other task force, Mills, stopped for the night at Blaregnies, five miles south of the city.

CCA's Task Force X advanced up the direct main road to Mons through Avesnes and Maubeuge. Avesnes was defended by elements of the 12. SS-Panzer-Division, and not cleared by the armoured infantry until after noon. Maubeuge, 11 miles further on, was taken without a fight. FFI fighters had sabotaged German demolition of the Sambre bridges there, and FFI guides led the columns through the welcoming crowds. Task Force X crossed the Franco-Belgian border at Bois-Bourdon at 1610 and two

**Mesvin . . . then and now. The picture was taken in front of what was then the farm of Madame Suzanne Lyon — No. 16 Chaussée Brunehault.**

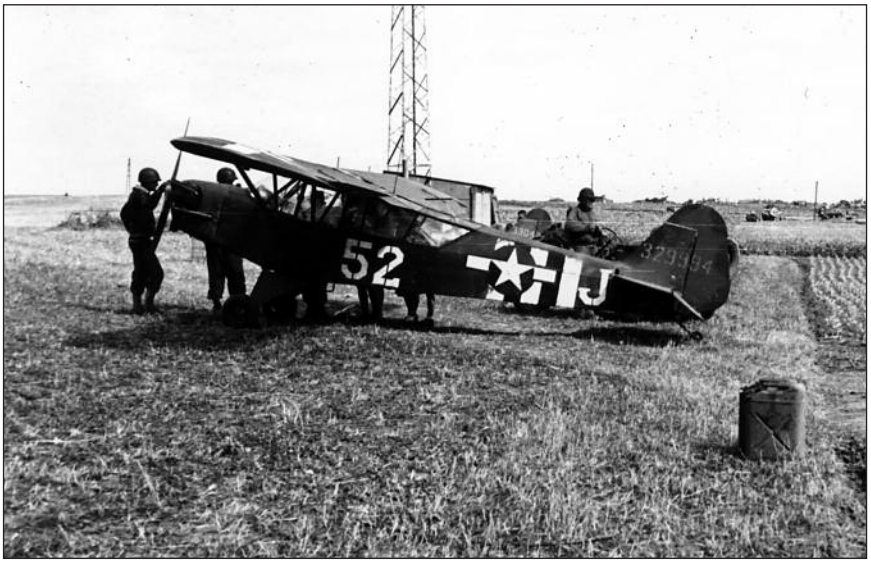
**About 5.30 p.m. on September 2 the spearheads of Task Force Y reached Hyon, on the outskirts of Mons. Here, an M3A1 half-track stands on the Place de la Chapelle. (YB/MT)**

**A bring-and-buy market was taking place when we took our comparison. The street along which Task Force Y entered the town is now named Rue des Américains.**

hours later was approaching Mons. CCA's right-hand column, Task Force Doan, meanwhile had advanced on a parallel route, crossing the Sambre at Assevent, just east of Maubeuge, and entering Belgium near Quévy. Both columns of CCA halted at the southern entrance to Mons, with only reconnaissance patrols penetrating into the town itself. While the combat command took up positions near Mont Panisel; on high ground east of the town; and around the coal slag-heap of Mont Eribus to the south, road-blocks were set up on all crossroads.

Although the Americans now held the outer fringes of Mons, the town itself was still held by Waffen-SS troops. That very same afternoon (September 2), SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 9 of the 9. SS-Panzer-Division, newly-equipped in East Prussia, had arrived by train in Mons, unloaded a dozen SP guns and taken up a hedgehog position in the town. They were awaiting link-up with the rest of their division, now named Kampf-gruppe 'Hohenstaufen', about 3,500 men who at that moment were assembling at the Mormal forest, 15 miles to the south-west, after having defended Cambrai. In the evening, the unit at Mons was reinforced by another battle group, Kampfgruppe 'Frundsberg' of the 10. SS-Panzer-Division, which had detoured out of the forming pocket via Tournai. The following morning, harassed only by French and Belgian Resistance action, Kampfgruppe 'Hohenstaufen' managed to reach Mons as well (having passed right between CCA and CCB). This combined SS force would hold the city and the road to Soignies until the early evening of the 3rd, escaping in good order before the Americans entered in strength.

CCR spent the morning of September 2 clearing up Hirson. Its further progress during the day was slowed by strong German opposition, so at 2000 hours its two columns received orders to disengage and switch west




**In the evening of September 2, two Piper Cubs carrying out artillery spotting for CCA landed in a nearby field. Over the last 50 years, this area has been developed with many new houses so that only the electricity poles now remain to indicate where the makeshift airstrip once lay making any comparison meaningless. (YB/MT)**

into CCA's zone. Continuing after dark, the lead column reached a position near Harveng, four miles south-east of Mons, at 2330 hours. The tail of the other column missed a turning and bumped into a German force at Harmignies, losing a tank destroyer and three half-tracks.

Division headquarters established itself in the Château de Warelles at the village of Quévy-le-Grand, five miles south of Mons. CCA's supply columns, escorted by a reconnaissance company, set up camp nearby, astride the Maubeuge-Mons main road and just north of the crossroad hamlet of Bois-Bourdon. Their perimeter was protected by a circle of seven road-blocks.

As the 3rd Armored advanced on Mons on September 2-3, closing the trap for the retreating Germans, higher headquarters were actually already thinking of the next battle. It was only the difficulty of communication between commanders that saved the Americans from inadvertently re-opening the trap door again. General Hodges had notified Corlett and Gerow on September 1 that there was talk of swinging eastward

*Left:* **This half-track has pulled up in a field at the western end of Hyon. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **New buildings again prevent an accurate comparison but this picture of Rue des Canadiens shows the same two houses visible in the wartime shot.**

*Left:* **Advancing on the right of CCB, Task Force Lovelady crossed the border about 4.30 p.m. on the 2nd and reached Frameries an hour later. They continued northwards in the direction of Jemappes leaving a road-block at this crossroads just east of the town. At about 6.30 p.m. a horse-drawn column of five wagons and some 50 German soldiers approached from the west. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **The crossroads today with the Rue Ferrer in the foreground and Rue de Genly off to the right.**

again toward the Rhine, but he was unable to reach Collins by telephone that day. Thus, he did not transmit news that might have acted as a brake on the VII Corps drive to the north. Then, on September 2, Hodges received instructions to 'curl up' the VII Corps short of Mons and hold because of fuel shortages. But again he was unable to get word to the leading elements of the corps. Thus, by the morning of the 3rd, the 3rd Armored had reached the gates of Mons; the 9th Division on the east flank had moved to Charleroi; and the 1st Division was pushing into Avesnes, on the tail of the 3rd Armored units.

Few prisoners had been taken by XIX and V Corps, but this apparent absence of German forces in the Avesnes-Mons area was

*Left:* **The Germans halted at the road-block which was being guarded by an M5 light tank of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, some GIs, and a few men from the Belgian Resistance. After conferring, the Germans surrendered peacefully. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **A vendre! The house on the corner had just been sold when we took our comparison.**

deceptive. Actually, the VII Corps northwards thrust had cut off those large German forces that were moving into the area southwest of Mons, generally along the axis Cambrai—Valenciennes—Mons and Le Cateau—Bavay—Binche. As Blumenson put it: 'Blocked on the east by the 3rd Armored Division, pushed on the west by the XIX Corps near Valenciennes, hemmed in on the south from Cambrai to Landrecies by the V Corps, about to be cut off on the north by the British advance beyond Tournai, and jabbed on the south-east by the 1st Division, a large, amorphous enemy group was pocketed'.

These troops mainly belonged to three corps — the LXXIV. Armeekorps, the LVIII. Panzerkorps and the II. SS-Panzerkorps — that were under the control of the 5. Panzerarmee. To the west, they were being separated from the army's right wing — LXXXI. Armeekorps — by XIX Corps' northwards thrust and to the east, VII Corps' advance was severing the army's left wing — the I. SS-Panzerkorps. Out of contact with the 5. Panzerarmee, the three corps commanders — General der Infanterie Erich Straube of LXXIV. Armeekorps, General der Panzertruppen Walter Krüger of LVIII. Panzerkorps and SS-Obergruppenführer Willi Bittrich of II. SS-Panzerkorps — conferred on August 31 near Saint-Quentin. They decided to form a provisional army among themselves and General Straube, the senior of them, assumed command.

They were in the dark on what was happening outside their immediate area but, from Allied radio broadcasts and occasional reports by subordinate headquarters, they knew that their forces were in imminent danger of encirclement. They agreed to withdraw as quickly as possible to the north-east in the direction of Mons and Nivelles.

The forces under their control were remnants of the 6. Fallschirmjäger-Division, about two battalions strong, and of the 18. Feld-Division (L) in one battalion strength; elements of the 3. Fallschirmjäger-Division, almost insignificant in number; the remnants of the 47., 275. and 348. Infanterie-Divisions; a mixed formation known as Divisionsgruppe von Aulock; Kampfgruppe 'Hohenstaufen' of the 9. SS-Panzer-Division and Kampfgruppe 'Frundsberg' of the 10. SS-Panzer-Division; and dispersed elements of the 49., 271., 344. and 352. Infanterie-Divisions. Around these forces had gathered fragmentary units, stragglers, depot personnel and a host of miscellaneous troops.

*Above:* **Frameries on September 2 — an American medic treats two wounded prisoners. (US Army)** *Below:* **We traced M. Alphonse Daniel (on the right in the picture) who showed us exactly where the photo had been taken — outside No. 147 Rue Ferrer.**

**In their drive for Mons, the two combat commands of the 3rd Armored Division inched ahead at a walking pace, stopping frequently. Here the people of Cuesmes cheer as a Sherman of CCB passes through on September 2. (US Army)**

Late on September 1, the three corps commanders discussed the situation by telephone: enemy armoured forces were advancing from Avesnes in the direction of Mons and other armoured formations were moving from Bapaume and Douai in the direction of Cambrai. There was no contact with 5. Panzerarmee and, from 1945 hours, orders to withdraw were sent by radio to the divisions. At 2030 hours, Straube went to the LVIII. Panzerkorps command post to coordinate, orders were confirmed and reports on the movements undertaken were sent to Heeresgruppe B and 5. Panzerarmee.

During the night, Straube moved his command post to Preux-au-Bois, while Krüger and his staff fell back to nearby Hecq, both of them villages on the south-western edge of the Mormal forest. The II. Panzerkorps moved its command post back to Villereau, six miles to the north.

On the morning of September 2, a fuel supply convoy of the Luftwaffe was reported in the Mormal forest, with 50 cubic metres of fuel, and the precious liquid was sorted out between units of the LVIII. Panzerkorps: 15 cubic metres were allocated to the 348. Infanterie-Division, 14 to the 18. Feld-Division (L), ten each to the 3. and 6. Fallschirmjäger-Divisions and the last cubic metre went to the corps headquarters.

**Reaching Mons, the 3rd Armored Division's three combat commands did not try to enter the town itself but remained on the outskirts and waited. In the evening of September 2, CCA bivouacked to the south-east, on both sides of Hyon, CCB was to the west at Ghlin and CCR to the south near Harveng and Givry. These pictures of Shermans of Task Force Mills (Company I, 33rd Armored Regiment) attacking at Ghlin were taken next morning. (US Army)**

At midday, a staff conference was held at Straube's command post in Preux-au-Bois, with Krüger and Bittrich and some of their staff officers. In the morning, an order from the 5. Panzerarmee had arrived by telephone instructing that the 348. Infanterie-Division be moved to the sector south of Cambrai. Obviously, the army staff had not received any of the reports sent earlier that morning, nor even the ones sent the previous evening, and this order was completely out of touch with the real situation. Straube decided to discard it, as he did with another order from 5. Panzerarmee received by radio at 1630 hours which stipulated that LXXXI. and LXXIV. Armeekorps hold a line between Douai and north of Caudry; LVIII. Panzerkorps from that point to the Sambre river; and II. SS-Panzerkorps from there to Bailièvre, while on the left I. SS-Panzerkorps was to prolong the line as far as the junction with 1. Armee at Charleville.

The threat of encirclement became clearer in the evening when enemy armour was reported advancing on Maubeuge, another armoured group moving towards Mons and more armour to the south-west of Bavay. The withdrawal orders to the sector between Nivelles and Charleroi were speeded up, the II. SS-Panzerkorps holding the right flank, LVIII. Panzerkorps the left. At 1800 hours, Generalmajor Hubertus von Aulock, former commander of the Paris outer defences and

**Arriving from the south, the spearheads of Task Force Mills outflanked the strong German force that was making a last stand in Ghlin in front of the infantry of Task Force Lovelady and Belgian partisans. The approach of a US armoured force led the Germans to quickly fall back east in the direction of Nimy. Smoke rises in the background from the Château Milfort, hit by tank fire. (US Army)**

**This area between Jemappes and Ghlin is marshy. The Quéwette river was canalised in the early 'fifties, the road following it has been completely rebuilt and the houses visible on the 1944 pictures all domolished. However, the marshy ground has progressively collapsed and the new road subsided to such an extent that it is now closed to traffic. M. Toubeau took this approximate comparison *(right)* on Rue de la Quéwette on the southern outskirts of Ghlin.**

*Left:* **Elements of CCB were passing through Frameries at about 11 a.m. on September 3, moving along Rue Léon Defuisseaux before turning right, northwards, at the Quatre Pavés crossroads. Suddenly, two German horse-drawn carts emerged from a side road (Rue Jean Volders) whereupon the US tankers opened up at point-blank range. This picture was taken only a few minutes later. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **Rue Léon Defuisseaux, looking in the direction from where the Americans came.**

now of the divisional battle group named after him, arrived at the LVIII. Panzerkorps headquarters and returned with a written order to withdraw his formation.

With little ammunition, fuel or communications left, the units of the provisional army struggling to withdraw to the north-east were in complete confusion. Harassed from the air and ambushed by Resistance groups, they soon blundered into American road-blocks. The trek and escape of General Krüger and his LVIII. Panzerkorps staff may serve as a representative example. At 2030 hours on September 2, the HQ troops started northwards from Preux-au-Bois in cars and trucks. At Le Quesnoy, their rearguard was surprised by an FFI attack and suffered some losses. Via Bavay, they moved throughout the night and by 0700 hours on the 3rd, were approaching the Belgian border just north of Malplaquet. There, they came across US armour and had to detour southwards by way of Feignies. About 0830 hours, in a sharp firefight in the village, they brushed aside a strong party of FFI. One hour later, they broke through at Mairieux, just north of Maubeuge, one of the last open passages through the 3rd Armored Division's line. They continued along secondary roads, pushing aside the many destroyed vehicles that stood on their way. In the afternoon, they passed through Binche and were just leaving to the north-east when they saw US armour entering the town. By 1900 hours, the group had reached Mellery, six miles west of Gembloux, where they re-established the LVIII. Panzerkorps command post. There was no contact at all with any of the subordinate divisions. Oberst Gerhard Triepel was sent to find the 5. Panzerarmee HQ, then at Noville-les-Bois, six miles north-east of Namur, to report on the corps situation.

The main escape route out of the pocket was the diagonal road running north-east from Bavay via the Bois-Bourdon crossroads to Binche and Charleroi. Thus, it was the 3rd Armored's forces located nearest to Bois-Bourdon — Division Headquarters, CCA's maintenance and supply force, and the light forces defending it — that were to feel the strongest pressure of the flood of German troops struggling to get out.

The battle started in the early hours of September 3, while it was still pitch dark. The lone reconnaissance detachment of the 32nd Armored Regiment guarding the Bois-Bourdon crossroads gave the first alarm of the approach of a long German column (probably of the 348. Infanterie-Division), knocking out the lead vehicle, a PzKpfw III. However, other panzers and German infantry soon forced it to pull back 300 yards to the north, enabling the rest of this German column to pass through unharmed. Shortly

**A quarter of an hour later, an SdKfz 8 prime mover from Eugies arrived at the Quatre Pavés crossroads. It had a 150mm gun in tow with some 20 men riding on top. At the junction, it ran straight into another column of CCB. The people standing on the street cheering their liberators immediately dropped to the ground or ran for cover as the Americans swiftly brought a 57mm anti-tank gun into action. The prime mover was hit and immediately caught fire and those Germans who were not killed in the conflagration were cut down by machine-gun fire. (YB/MT)**

**The Quatre Pavés crossroads as it appears today. Task Force Lovelady approached down the road on the right, with the intention of proceeding left to Cuesmes.**

**In their drive northwards, the US combat commands left behind only light forces to guard the route just taken and the trapped German troops exploited any gap found in the American rear lines. At Bois-Bourdon, where CCA had cut across the road running diagonally north-east from Bavay to Binche, the GIs stationed near the crossroads felt the pressure of German troops struggling to get through from the early hours of September 3.** *Above:* **At Quévy-le-Grand, just north of this crossroads, a captured German officer knocks at the window of a house to call his men out. (US Army)** *Right:* **Rue de l'Epinette at Quévy-le-Grand.** *Below:* **The same officer (a Hauptmann commanding a company according to the wartime caption) later led the Americans to this nearby wood: 'Nazis respond to surrender call of their captain'. (US Army)**

*Left:* **Escorted by four GIs of the 3rd Armored Division, three German prisoners are marched to the POW cage which had been quickly set up in the yard of a factory near Hyon. (YB/MT)**
*Above:* **The picture was taken at the level crossing near the railway station between Ciply and Hyon. This is the Chaussée de Maubeuge, looking northwards.**

after, at 0145, the road-blocks protecting CCA's supply perimeter heard a second enemy column moving towards the same crossroads over a secondary road. Opening fire from 100 yards, they set a dozen vehicles ablaze. The rest of the German force veered to the right, escaping across country in the darkness of the night.

**This field south of Mesvin in front of the Bélian brewery was surrounded by walls and thereby provided a suitable location for a temporary POW camp. Machine guns were set in position at each corner to guard more than 3,000 prisoners. The Mont Eribus slag-heap can be seen in the left background. (YB/MT)**

**The Bélian brewery has since closed its doors and many of its old buildings have been pulled down. Now cows graze in the same field but Yves Bourdon, who was with us when we took this comparison, told us that as late as 1990 it was still possible to pick up items — such as identity discs, empty cans, spoons and forks — abandoned in this field by the German prisoners in 1944.**

At daybreak, with German troops pouring headlong into the 3rd Armored road obstacles everywhere, the crews of tanks and tank destroyers had a field day. At 0630 hours near Blaregnies, two tank destroyer platoons of Task Force Mills intercepted a German artillery column moving up the Mons road from Malplaquet and in a short battle knocked out 40 of its 50 vehicles, including one 88mm, three 105mm and three 155mm guns. However, rather than stay in position to catch more enemy columns, at 0730 Task Force Mills withdrew northwards to join up with Task Force Lovelady west of Mons. (This enabled several German groups to sneak through to Mons and escape from the pocket.)

At 0400 hours, the tank crews at one of the CCA road-blocks on the southern edge of Mons spotted a German column passing in front of it at 100 yards distance. Within seconds, four 37mm flak wagons and eight other vehicles were destroyed or set ablaze. At 0830, another tank road-block nearby shot up two trucks pulling 88mm guns of Fallschirm-Flak-Abteilung 3, killing eight men and rounding up 34 prisoners.

Before dawn, three German tanks seized Cheval-Blanc, the next crossroads further south, in an attempt to open the Givry road for other escape columns. However, those that got through ran straight into CCR's blocking position at Harveng. The CCR tanks were on the crest of a hill looking down on the Germans coming towards them, and few of the enemy managed to break past their road-block. In the nightly battle, the Americans knocked out two of the three panzers and some 20 vehicles. A German artillery convoy with three 75mm pieces stumbled into the firing position of CCR's 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and was captured.

In this confusing battle, there was no front and rear for the 3rd Armored. Supply and maintenance troops, signalmen, medics and other rear-echelon personnel found themselves in the middle of the action, many of them fighting alongside the combat troops.

The medical aid post established by Company A of the 45th Armored Medical Battalion between Cheval-Blanc and Warelles found itself positioned right between the firing lines. As the morning wore on, the aid post was flooded by hundreds of wounded from the battle on the Givry road, most of them German. Unable to evacuate the over 380 patients due to the fighting and shelling all around, the medics treated and guarded them until relieved in the afternoon.

The Division Command Post in the Château de Warelles at Quévy-le-Grand was protected by a tank company and an infantry company, but these were not strong enough to prevent German troops from infiltrating into the command post perimeter. The

**Altogether, about 25,000 Germans were taken prisoner in the Mons pocket. However the total might have been much higher if the Americans had been more expedient in closing the trap. The 3rd Armored Division had advanced on Mons quite slowly and had not left adequate forces behind to secure the roads. Also, VII Corps was slow off the mark in ordering the 1st Division to follow and many escape routes were left open for another 12 hours. It would appear that both General Collins, the VII Corps commander, and General Rose of the 3rd Armored, were more interested in resuming the advance eastwards to the Rhine than in cleaning up the situation at Mons. As a result, large German forces were able to slip through on September 2 and more followed during the night and the next day. All told, at least 40,000 German soldiers managed to escape from the pocket.** *Left:* **The prisoners in this GMC are booed by boy scouts as they are evacuated from Mons. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **The Grand Place today.**

divisional Chief-of-Staff, Colonel John H. Smith, organised all headquarters personnel that could be spared from duty — clerks, drivers, signalmen — into an ad hoc defence force to throw the enemy back. Dubbed 'Combat Command Smith', this force in a battle lasting 36 hours captured 600 prisoners and neutralised 69 vehicles.

Nearby, at the divisional POW cage in Quévy's old sugar refinery, Major Charles H. Kapes, the Division Military Police Officer, his 16 enlisted men and 27 attached infantrymen of the 1st Division fought a pitched battle, in which they captured 300 Germans while guarding 4,000 prisoners at the same time. The story goes that, in the confusion, a CCA military policeman, directing traffic at night, calmly motioned a German Panther tank into an American bivouac area. The tank continued on in and the crew surrendered.

Yet, throughout the morning of the 3rd, the Germans continued to exploit any gap left in the four-mile stretch between Maubeuge and the Bois-Bourdon crossroads. Many groups managed to squeeze through, using either the main road through Bois-Bourdon or the network of smaller roads further south. Then, in the afternoon, P-47 fighter-bombers of the IX Tactical Air Command picked up the closely-packed Wehrmacht columns, jammed nose to tail on the Bois-Bourdon road. As the aircraft swooped down, all occupants jumped down from the vehicles and horse-drawn wagons, seeking

**The prisoners came from at least 20 different divisions and a multitude of units and services. Judging by their uniforms, some of the men being searched here at Ciply on September 3 are paratroopers, either from the 3. Fallschirmjäger-Division or from the 6. Fallschirmjäger-Division. Note the woman seemingly acting as interpreter. The picture was taken outside No. 548 Rue de Maubeuge. (YB/MT)**

**Among the prisoners were three generals, Generalmajor Rudiger von Heyking, Generalmajor Carl Wahle and Generalmajor Hubertus von Aulock.** *Left:* **Generalmajor von Heyking, commander of the 6. Fallschirmjäger-Division, was captured in a quarry near Ciply with many of his staff on the morning of September 3. On his left stands Major Constantin von Quardt.** *Right:* **Generalmajor Wahle of the 47. Infanterie-Division was caught with his staff near the Hyon-Ciply railway station on the 4th.**

**At Goegnies-Chaussée, CCA cut one of the main escape routes and, although many groups of Germans had succeeded in avoiding capture during the night and morning of September 3, hundreds of vehicles — tanks, trucks, guns, horse-drawn transport — had remained jammed nose to tail on the road. From midday on the 3rd, Thunderbolts of the 395th Fighter Squadron bombed and strafed the endless columns of closely-packed vehicles and by evening, over five kilometres of the road was choked with some 600 wrecked vehicles, 400 dead horses and 300 mangled and burned corpses. In the process the village of Goegnies suffered badly, with at least 30 houses destroyed and 50 more badly damaged. Bulldozers were soon brought up to clear the road pushing everything aside with scant ceremony.** *Above:* **On September 5, GIs of the 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Division, surveyed the carnage from their Jeep.**

**Who would recognise this as being the same spot today? Our comparison was taken looking eastwards, the left-hand side of the road lying in Belgium and the right-hand side in France. The Bois-Bourdon crossroads lie just two kilometres further on.**

*Left:* **German material losses were at least 40 armoured vehicles, 100 half-tracks, over 200 artillery, anti-tank and flak guns, and about 2,000 vehicles. This SdKfz 7 prime mover with its 150mm in tow was disabled at Frameries on September 2. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **It had been photographed on Rue Ferrer, looking eastwards in the direction from where the Americans had arrived.**

*Left:* **The Valenciennes-Mons road was another main escape route until 6.20 p.m. on September 2, when the vanguard of Task Force Lovelady advancing from the south opened up a devastating fusillade at the German convoy they surprised at Jemappes. In a matter of minutes the main street was covered with burning vehicles, dead horses and wounded or killed soldiers. This was how Avenue Foch — the road to Mons — appeared on the following morning. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **But for the cobblestones now replaced with macadam, little has changed. In the centre, Saint Ferdinand school.**

shelter in buildings, ditches and woods lining the road. Amid the chaos and panic, a few brave flak gunners stayed at their guns to fire back at the aircraft, but to little avail. Soon, the road was choked with hundreds of burning vehicles, wrecked guns, dead horses, mangled corpses.

All day, the M7 guns of the 54th and 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalions, from firing positions south of Mons, wrought havoc and destruction among the German columns, their fire directed by an observation officer on top of the Mont Eribus slagheap.

Meanwhile, further south, Major General Clarence R. Huebner's 1st Division had begun to strike the retreating German columns full in their right flank. The division had started out from Avesnes in the morning, but it had taken a while for the attack to come under steam, as VII Corps had given no indication of the urgency of the situation. At 0830, the 1st Battalion of the 26th Infantry had set out northwards by truck with orders to relieve the 3rd Armored at Mons. Then, at 1000, it received word that the 3rd Armored's divisional headquarters was under enemy attack. At the same time, reconnaissance aircraft reported large concentrations of enemy columns making their way from Bavay north-eastward through the corridor between Maubeuge and Mons. Alerted by this, at 1135, the 1st Division issued orders for the attack to be speeded up. The 18th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) was instructed to swing to the west, going around the Mormal forest, to intercept the German columns at Bavay. The 26th RCT was to move up to Avesnes and then fan out to the west to break up and eliminate enemy

**With the main road to Mons cut, the Germans turned to side streets to try to bypass the road-block. There were numerous clashes with Belgian partisans and many civilians were killed. This Tiger II of schwere SS-Panzer-Abteilung 101, positioned on Avenue Foch some distance to the west of the road-block, fired throughout the night of September 2/3 to defend the western part of the town. (J-L. Roba)**

units in that area. And the 16th RCT was to follow the 26th to Avesnes but then carry on northwards to occupy Mons in force.

The division's lead unit, the 1st Battalion of the 26th Infantry, motored through Maubeuge without any enemy contact but, having dismounted just north of there, ran into a sharp battle with a German force crossing the highway from west to east near the village of Bettignies. The battalion formed a box position on the road, facing west, and opened withering fire on the Germans moving towards them. Doggedly the Germans kept coming, launching five consecutive attacks. The battle lasted till mid-afternoon. When it was over, 200 Germans had been killed and 2,400 taken prisoner. Meanwhile, the five tanks and four tank destroyers attached to the battalion fired at the Bois-Bourdon crossroads to the north, destroying nine vehicles and interdicting further traffic there. At 1700 hours, the 1st Battalion occupied the crossroads, putting the final lid on that escape route too.

The rest of the 26th RCT had similar experiences. To move more quickly, the infantry used all available transport: tanks, tank destroyers, Jeeps, supply trucks, even

*Left:* **The crew abandoned the Tiger in the early hours of September 3. Its gun remained pointing eastwards, towards the Americans although the tank itself faced the opposite direction — possibly it was knocked out while trying to move to a safer location.** *Right:* **We found that the picture had been taken on Avenue Foch, near the junction with Rue de l'Industrie. (YB/MT)**

*Left:* **At about 4 a.m. on September 3, a German convoy, trying to extricate itself northwards from Ciply, arrived at the T-junction with the Chaussée de Maubeuge. The American road-block was situated near the railway station, some distance to the left of this junction, and comprised four tank destroyers of the 703rd TD Battalion. As soon as the Germans were spotted turning left and approaching the road-block, the Americans opened up. This SdKfz 7/2 half-track, armed with a 37mm Flak 36 gun, was one of the vehicles hit. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **In front of the Saint-Joseph chapel today.**

**When day dawned, the junction showed up littered with blown-up vehicles and badly burned and mutilated bodies. Across the road, a Ford truck had been driven down into the By river. The body of M. Emile Dehon, a Belgian whom the Germans had impressed as a guide, lay nearby. He had been sitting on the front of the leading half-track when American fire blew the vehicle to pieces. (YB/MT)**

**Chaussée de Maubeuge, looking in the direction of Mons from the bridge over the By rivulet. The Saint-Joseph chapel (see top of this page) lies just a few metres beyond the curve of the road.**

captured German vehicles. Advancing westwards from Maubeuge, the lead company of 3rd Battalion drove into a German regiment at La Longueville, and the surprised German soldiers just moved aside and surrendered to the companies following behind. Two miles further on in the direction of Mons, approaching Malplaquet from the south, these companies spotted another German column moving across their front on the diagonal road from Bavay to Binche. Their machine guns and supporting armour poured devastating fire on it from 900 yards, after which the infantry attacked. Several hundred Germans were taken prisoner, countless others lay dead or wounded. The German column was in fact only one part of the endless stream of convoys making its way from Bavay to Bois-Bourdon and beyond. Miles of double-rowed vehicles — tanks, trucks, guns, horse-drawn transport — could be seen stretching both to the west and east. Like at Bois-Bourdon further up the road, P-47 fighter-bombers completely smashed these trapped convoys in the afternoon. By the end of the day, the 26th RCT (minus its 1st Battalion) had reached Frameries, to the south-west of Mons, where it dug in.

The 16th RCT had numerous clashes with enemy groups as it moved up the main road to Mons, rounding up hundreds of prisoners, sometimes in areas already passed through by the 26th RCT. By the evening, the 1st Battalion was in Mons and the 3rd Battalion in position beyond the canal to the north of the city. The 2nd Battalion meanwhile had orders to clear the La Lanière woods, north-west of Maubeuge, but these proved to be chock-full of German troops, fugitives from the air-pummelled columns on the Bavay—Bois-Bourdon road just to the north of it. A stiff firefight erupted in the woods, with fighting at very close quarters, which lasted all through the night. At 0400, a German captain requested a cease-fire to evacuate the wounded. The American battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert C. Hicks, refused, insisting that the Germans surrender. The Hauptmann accepted. From 0630, the Germans came out of the woods in groups of 50. When the final count was made, a total of 3,256 men had surrendered (700 of them wounded), the largest number of prisoners captured by a single US infantry battalion in the entire European campaign.

The 18th RCT reached Bavay in the early afternoon of the 3rd, clearing the town and blocking all enemy traffic through it. Another endless German column was now bottled up on the road stretching ten miles back to Le Cateau. The road was systematically and mercilessly shelled, bombed and strafed until it too was choked with wrecked

and burning vehicles. Many Germans took refuge in the Mormal forest, the large forest lying directly east of the road, hoping to escape on foot during the night. But the 18th Infantry had left its 2nd Battalion to seal off the eastern side of the forest. Several times during the night, groups of Germans tried to break out. Some succeeded, others did not. In this battle, Pfc Gino J. Merli of Company H, 18th Infantry, feigned death after his machine-gun section had been overrun, but re-opened fire as soon as the Germans had left. He remained at his weapon throughout the night, repeating the same ruse twice more; at dawn 52 enemy dead were found around his position. (Merli was awarded the Medal of Honor.)

The 3rd Armored Division played little part in the fighting on September 4. CCA's road-blocks at the southern outskirts of Mons captured several isolated German vehicles during the morning, and two companies of the 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion, aided by two tank platoons of CCR, helped relieve the 33rd and 957th Field Artillery Battalions of the 1st Division which had become surrounded near Malplaquet, but that was all. From 1400 hours, the 3rd Armored units began leaving the Mons sector, having been ordered to resume the advance to the east. One tank battalion of CCR (the 3rd Battalion of the 33rd Armored Regiment) was left behind to support the 1st Division.

By then, the situation in the pocket had become more stabilised. The 1st Division was systematically rounding up thousands of prisoners, liquidating remaining enemy pockets with the help of Belgian partisans. Most of the encircled Germans were in no mood to fight and surrendered easily, but there were still some who carried on till the end. The morning battle around the threatened artillery position near Malplaquet, in which both the 18th and 26th Infantry participated, bagged some 900 prisoners. One of the last major actions took place at Sars-la-Bruyère, five miles south-west of Mons. Around midnight of September 4/5, a German horse-drawn artillery column tried to break through a road-block established there by the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry. The Americans responded with artillery and mortars. The battle lasted all night. When the Germans finally gave up and surrendered on the morning of the 5th, 52 of them had been killed and some 160 wounded. The Americans took 483 prisoners, six 105mm guns and over 200 horses.

Mopping up continued. Throughout the 5th, isolated groups of Germans were weeded out, particularly from the Mormal forest, and as late as 1700, the 26th Infantry accepted the surrender of a group of nearly 3,000 Germans at Wasmes, a village three miles south-west of Mons.

**Having taken the picture that appears in the centre of the page opposite, the photographer turned left and crossed the road. Looking in the direction of Ciply from where the German convoy had arrived, he then took this shot of Rue Emile Vandervelde, with two disabled vehicles: an SdKfz 10 light prime mover with a Citroën just behind. It looks as if some resourceful individuals have already made good use of the two front wheels of the half-track! (YB/MT)**

**Rue Emile Vandervelde remains just as it was half a century ago. The By river runs just out of the picture on the left, and the T-junction where the German convoy was shot to pieces lies just behind the photographer.**

*Left:* **This camouflaged Hummel (a 150mm SP gun built on a PzKpfw IV chassis) was abandoned by its crew right in the middle of the road in Genly, five kilometres south-west of Mons, but it was soon bulldozed aside by US engineers. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **Rue Grande has seen little change with the Paris-Bruxelles main railway line still crossing the village.**

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**It was 5.20 p.m. on September 2 when the point of Task Force Lovelady reached Frameries. They continued northwards, leaving only a small force behind to hold the town, so for a few hours at least German troops, with tanks and vehicles, were able to squeeze through and escape eastwards. The trap was more firmly closed from about 8 p.m. and the Germans caught thereafter just abandoned their transport to try to escape on foot in the darkness. Before they left, they placed explosive charges along the column of vehicles on the Rue Ferrer which detonated at 10 p.m. Ammunition in the vehicles exploded and a chain-reaction set the whole street ablaze.** *Above:* **The detritis of war on Rue Ferrer . . . as seen on the morning of September 3, with only a Citroën lorry and car recognisable amid the wreckage.**

**This picture was taken between the crossroads seen on page 17 and the wounded German being treated on page 18.**

**As soon as the smoke of battle cleared at Ghlin, local people began cutting steaks from the carcasses of dead horses. (US Army)**

**At a conference on September 2 at Chartres, General Eisenhower agreed with Generals Bradley, Hodges and Patton that the First Army was to shift from its northwards course to an eastward axis and head towards Koblenz and Mannheim. The reorientation was begun on the 3rd but fuel was in short supply and only V and VII Corps were able to move on that day. On September 4, General Collins, the VII Corps commander, pulled up in his M20 armoured car in the Grand Place of Beaumont (30 kilometres south-east of Mons) to check his map. A mother and her son stood watching him but to give more punch to this picture when reproduced in the Press, the caption writer described them as standing 'in fixed admiration'. (US Army)**

By the evening of September 5, the battle of the Mons Pocket was over. The Germans had suffered tremendous losses. On September 3 alone, the 3rd Armored and 1st Divisions had taken between 7,500 and 9,000 prisoners. The IX Tactical Air Command claimed the destruction of 851 motor vehicles, 50 armoured vehicles, 652 horse-drawn vehicles, and 485 persons (as always, these claims by air forces are to be regarded with caution). Total German material losses in the pocket were some 40 armoured vehicles, tanks and SP guns, 100 half-tracked vehicles, 120 artillery pieces, 100 anti-tank and flak guns, and nearly 2,000 vehicles. An estimated 3,500 Germans had been killed. In three days about 25,000 had been taken prisoner, remnants of 20 different divisions and of a multitude of miscellaneous units and services. These potential defenders of the West Wall were thus wiped off the field of battle.

Among the prisoners were three generals: Generalmajor Rudiger von Heyking, commander of the 6. Fallschirmjäger-Division, captured in a quarry near Ciply on the morning of September 3; Generalmajor Carl Wahle of the 47. Infanterie-Division, caught

*Left:* **Meanwhile, a batch of prisoners rounded up in Beaumont, most of them from the Luftwaffe, was being marched across the square by members of the Resistance. (US Army)** *Right:* **Both pictures were taken at the same time, from more or less the same spot on the Grand Place, the photographer having merely turned around to make his second exposure. The building on the right is just off to the left in the picture at the top of the page.**

*Left:* **The 9th Infantry Division began operations to seize a bridgehead over the Meuse near Dinant on September 3 but the 3rd Armored remained immobilised throughout the next day waiting for fuel. It started eastwards in the afternoon of the 4th with Namur and Liège as its objectives. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **The picture was taken on the Rue des Capucins in Mons.**

*Left:* **An M7 — a 105mm M2A1 howitzer mounted on an M3 medium tank chassis — of the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion exits Mons as part of Combat Command A. Once on its way, the 3rd Armored Division advanced east in four columns with Combat Command B on the right in two columns and Combat Command A on the left in a similar formation. (YB/MT)** *Right:* **Avenue Reine Astrid, the main road out of Mons . . . then and now.**

with his staff near Hyon-Ciply railway station on the 4th; and Generalmajor Hubertus von Aulock, commanding the divisional battle group carrying his name, who was captured that same day at Ciply.

Though nearly 30,000 men had been killed or captured, an estimated 40,000 had succeeded to slip out of the pocket, among them General Straube and his staff; the headquarters personnel of LVIII. Panzerkorps and II. SS-Panzerkorps; the battle groups of the 9. and 10. SS-Panzer-Divisions; parts of the 275. and 348. Infanterie-Divisions; and small detachments of the 3. and 6. Fallschirmjäger-Divisions.

*Left:* **That same afternoon at Strépy-Bracquegnies, 12 kilometres east of Mons, M. Yves Empain pictured Combat Command A advancing eastwards. This is Rue Tombou. 'Cheering Belgians urged the armour forward. There was sun and dust and victory in the air', recorded the history of the 3rd Armored.**

*Right:* **M10 tank destroyers of the 634th TD Battalion in the Rue Florence Coppée. By the morning of September 6, the Meuse was bridged at Namur but the 3rd Armored Division was still short of fuel and only a task force could be despatched southwards to help the 9th Division (see *After the Battle* No. 98).**

Compared with the German ones, Allied losses at Mons were minute: between September 2-4, the 3rd Armored had lost 57 men killed, the 1st Division 32 killed and 93 wounded (the number of wounded for the 3rd Armored is unknown). Material losses were just two tanks, one tank destroyer, and about 20 other vehicles.

Although the battle for the Mons Pocket was a clear US victory, the gains could have been much higher if the Americans had acted with more speed and coordination. Though by early September 3, the Americans had gained control of the escape routes through Mons, they had displayed little efficiency in closing the trap. The 3rd Armored Division had closed on the city at a slow pace, taking two days to advance from Montcornet to Mons, a distance of only 50 miles. (In comparison: the 2nd Armored Division had covered the 65 miles from Péronne to Tournai in less than one day.) All local witnesses describe the 3rd Armored's spearheads as moving at walking speed, halting again and again for long periods of time. Reaching Mons, the division's three combat commands did not try to take control of the town but stopped in the south-eastern outskirts (CCA), to the west (CCB at Ghlin) and to the south (CCR near Harveng and Givry) and mainly waited there. They had left no adequate forces along the way to control the area between Maubeuge and Mons. VII Corps was slow in ordering the 1st Division forward and, in consequence, several vital escape routes remained open for another 12 hours. As a result, large German forces that should have been caught were able to escape on September 2 and more followed during the night of September 2/3. Though many German officers had been captured with maps that clearly showed the withdrawal in progress, the 3rd Armored remained as if unconcerned about it. Like his superiors Hodges and Collins, the division commander, General Rose, was apparently more interested in resuming the advance eastward to the Rhine than in cleaning up the situation at Mons. Indicative of this attitude is that, late on the 2nd, when the main stage of the battle was yet to begin, he instructed his troops to leave Mons next morning and advance to Namur. It is clear that neither Collins nor Rose appreciated how large an enemy force was coming towards Mons from the south-west.

Blumenson: 'The head-on encounter at Mons was, from the tactical point of view, a surprise for both sides. Neither Americans nor Germans had been aware of the approach of the other, and both had stumbled into an unforeseen meeting that resulted in a short, impromptu battle.'

**Awaiting fuel, XIX Corps remained out of action near Tournai for another day and only moved out on September 5. Here in Soignies, which lies 15 kilometres north-east of Mons, children greet the men of the 41st Armored Infantry Battalion. (US Army)**

**To widen the square which lies in the centre of the town, one house has been demolished and the statue moved to a new position.**

*Left:* **At Nivelles, 15 kilometres to the east, German air attacks in 1940 had destroyed the centre of the town, leaving an open space in front of the Collégiale. The troops belong to the 113th Cavalry Group. (US Army)** *Right:* **Although the left side of Rue de Mons has been rebuilt, this is the same spot. Compare these pictures with those on page 7 showing the German retreat.**

***Daily Mail,* August 5, 1914:'The Bank Holiday aspect of the London streets had gone yesterday. Monday's subdued excitement gave place yesterday to a grim determination. When ten thousand people were in front of Buckingham Palace at about eight o'clock last night, the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales, and Princess Mary came out on the centre balcony. After frantic cheers of loyalty the crowd sang with great fervour the National Anthem. Later the King, the Queen, and the Prince of Wales again appeared amid acclamation.'**

***The Times,* July 21, 1919: 'The crowds gathered to watch had fought; and they also were but representatives of all the millions that have fought and suffered for the day that is to be. One could not watch the procession without feeling that a whole world was present in thought; there was the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come. More than a triumph, it was the march of mankind through the ages for a moment made visible, a multitude which no man can number, of all nations and peoples and tongues.'**

# THE UK NATIONAL INVENTORY OF WAR MEMORIALS

## By Jane Armer, Judith Beresford, Nick Hewitt and Lorraine Knight

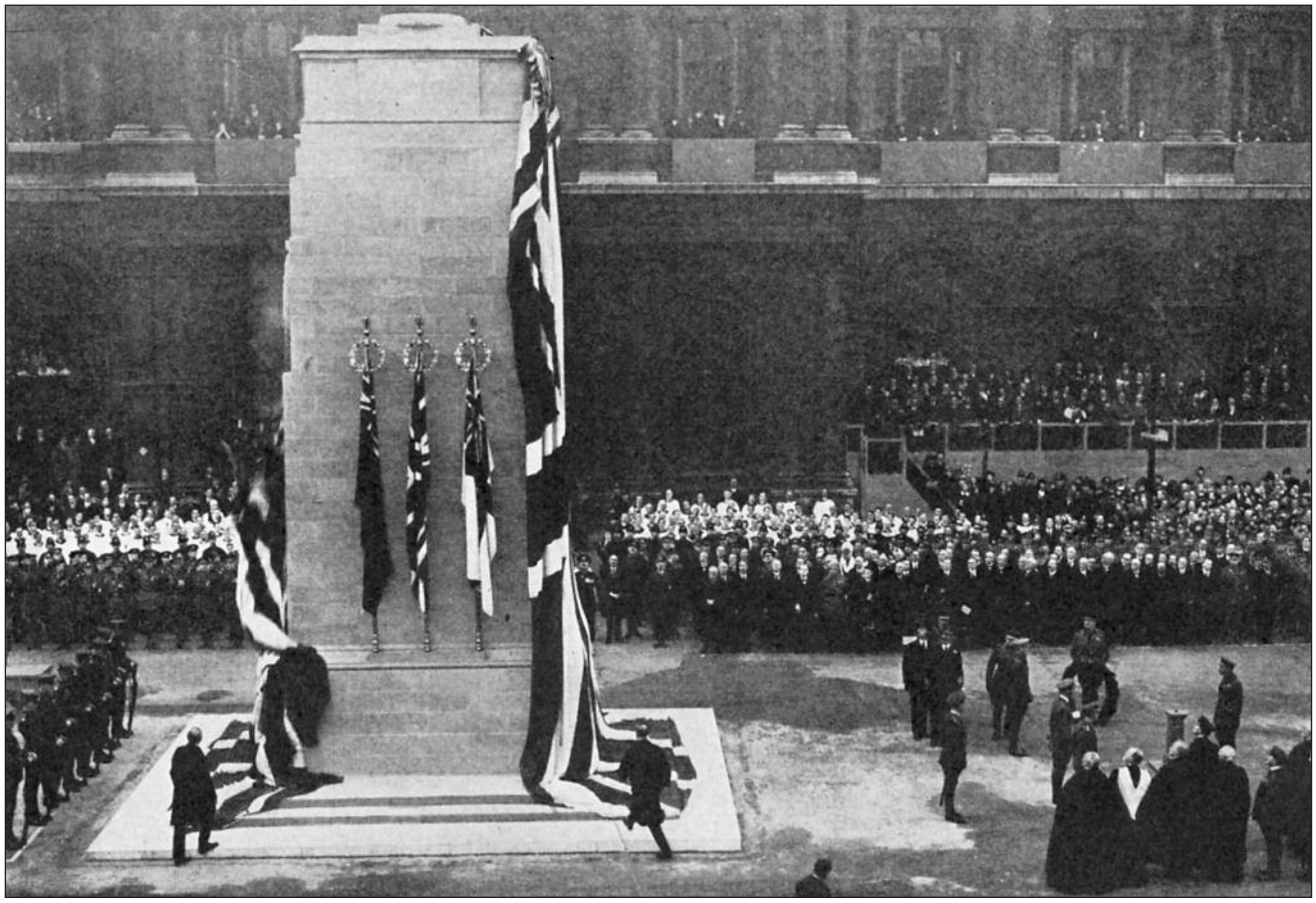
On Thursday, November 8, 2001, the Imperial War Museum was delighted to announce the launch of a new database and archive, the UK National Inventory of War Memorials. UKNIWM, established in 1989, has been a ground-breaking and successful partnership between major public institutions, a dedicated nationwide network of volunteers and generous sponsors, and is jointly administered by the Imperial War Museum and English Heritage.

Almost every community in the United Kingdom has a war memorial. Most memorials were erected after the First World War and usually the names of Second World War casualties were added after 1945. Some communities have memorials to the dead of earlier or later conflicts, for example the Crimean or Boer Wars, or the Korean or Falklands Wars.

Since 1989 UKNIWM's volunteers have carried out thousands of detailed site surveys, taking photographs and delving into their local archives, in order to put together as comprehensive a picture as possible of how their communities remembered their war dead.

About 45,000 of these records are on a computer database which is accessible to the public in the museum reading room. The database contains a wealth of information which will be invaluable to a wide range of researchers, pursuing the history of art or social history, military history and genealogy. Supporting the database is an archive of around 50,000 survey forms, together with photographs, postcards and other ephemera.

**Of over 45,000 war memorials now recorded on the UK National Inventory, the Cenotaph (from the Greek meaning an empty tomb) is undoubtedly the most well known. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, it was originally a temporary structure erected for the Peace Procession on Saturday, July 19, 1919. However, popular demand led to its replacement with a permanent stone memorial a year later.**



**The Cenotaph proper. Following the same design, save only for minor amendments like the victor's laurels added to the flagstaffs, it was erected on the same spot and unveiled on Armistice Day in 1920. It is now Inventory No. NIWM 104.**

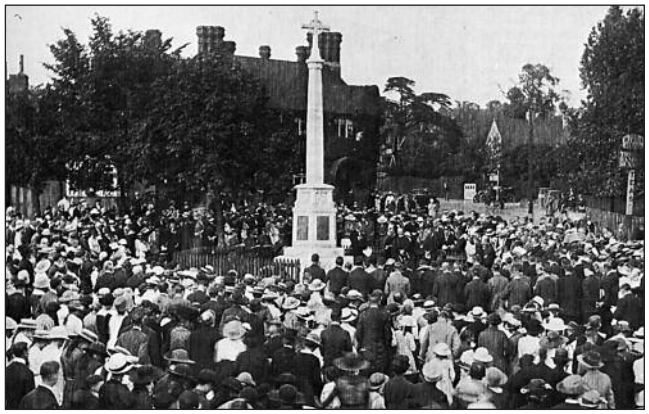
## THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The First World War was a traumatic event during which some three-quarters of a million British subjects died, and most were buried near where they fell or have no known graves. Exhumations and the repatriation of the dead were banned for the duration of the war in March 1915, and commemoration on the battlefield became the responsibility of the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission. The principle of non-repatriation was a long established tradition imposed on the British Army by circumstances, as distance alone had made it impossible to bring back the dead from places like India, South Africa or the Crimea. The IWGC therefore reiterated the ban at the end of the war. As a result, millions of the bereaved at home were left with no tangible focus for their grief.

During the war, communities made lists of local men and women who were serving and as news of casualties reached home these lists of those serving became revered objects. Constantly amended with news of deaths, promotions, wounds or awards of decorations, they were often placed, decked with flowers, outside churches and other conspicuous sites.

After the Armistice, decisions were made to build permanent memorials (although some were built during the war years). The best known is the Cenotaph in Whitehall erected as a temporary structure in 1919 and rebuilt during the following year as a permanent tribute to the fallen of the Empire. It remains the national focus of annual commemoration.

Local memorials took many forms. The most usual method of funding was public subscription. A committee would be formed which included representatives of local government and other prominent individuals. Their task was to oversee the funding and construction of a memorial. Many committees held public meetings where the views of local people could be heard and when decisions about the type and site of the memorial could be made. There was no legislation about the building of memorials so the impetus and methods employed were ad hoc and varied from place to place. At some unveiling ceremonies a memorial was formally passed from the care of the organising committee to the local council, the latter agreeing to preserve it in perpetuity. A few committees actually organised trusts for maintenance costs. In many cases, however, the future upkeep of the memorial was taken for granted.



**'To the members of the parish of Loughton who died on active service in the Great War 1914-18.' Very soon after hostilities had ceased, towns and villages all over the British Isles were erecting local memorials. This was an early one unveiled by Lord Lambourne, the Lord Lieutenant of Essex (formerly Colonel Mark Lockwood), on June 24, 1920 (NIWM 22469).**

**Local memorials were usually erected in a prominent place in the parish — like this obelisk** *(left)* **commemorating the dead of Leyton and Leytonstone beside the High Road (A11) unveiled in November 1926 (NIWM 12547). Others were placed in local cemeteries like that** *(centre)* **in All Saints Churchyard, Poplar, dedicated by the Bishop of Stepney in July 1922 (NIWM 18101).** *Right:* **Sizes and styles varied enormously, the Celtic cross being a popular design which was not just confined to those regions as demonstrated by this memorial in East London Cemetery (NIWM 12373).**

In 1923 a War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act enabled 'local authorities under certain circumstances to maintain, repair and protect war memorials vested in them'. This act empowered, but did not oblige, local councils to take responsibility for memorials at their own discretion. Amendments under the Local Government Acts of 1948 and 1972 did not materially affect the situation. The problem was not helped by the variety of memorials. Their location, type and funding have all contributed to the complexity of maintenance problems.

Eric Kennington's 'modernist' war memorial in Battersea Park is in many ways not truly representative, being a military memorial to the men of the 24th Division. Kennington has been described as 'a major figure in the history of British 20th century Art', and a major collection of his work is held at the Tate. He served with the division and presented the memorial as a gift. It was unveiled by Lord Plumer on October 4, 1924.

The memorial did not meet with universal approval: the soldier and self-appointed art critic Sir Edward Gleichen described it thus in his book *London's Outdoor Statuary*:

'That limited group of people who admire "futuristic" art will doubtless highly approve of this monument. It represents in stone three tin hatted figures. . . crunched together and looking straight to their front, while a serpent disports itself among their legs . . . the fore-end of one man's rifle has had to be cut away in order to get it under his hat; and their are no folds to their clothes anywhere.' He does however have one positive comment: 'the cylindrical pedestal,' he says, 'is pleasantly low.'

Figures of soldiers were typically more idealised than those of Kennington: classically beautiful and far removed from the horrific reality of the trenches. A fine example of this style is Robert Tait McKenzie's memorial to the men of Cambridge, unveiled by the Duke of York on July 3, 1923. Entitled *The Homecoming,* it depicts a young soldier striding forward, a German helmet slung from his pack, a wreath over his rifle barrel and holding a rose. Although in the uniform of a private soldier, he is, as the Australian historian Ken Inglis has pointed out, 'every inch the legendary public schoolboy or university student', who it is difficult to visualise as 'a man who has been through the Great War'.

Of course, most communities could not afford the luxury of figurative art. Simple, rough hewn crosses, often of the Celtic style 'wheel cross' variety, are one of the most common styles of monument to be seen, as at home in the soft lowlands of the home counties as true Celtic communities. The most common of all were mass produced plaques and tablets fixed to the walls of churches, or plain rolls of honour inscribed on parchment.

**More elaborate were those memorials designed to commemorate the fallen of a division or of a city.** *Left:* **Eric Kennington's memorial to the 24th Division stands in Battersea Park (NIWM 12486) and Robert McKenzie's monument (NIWM 887) to the men of Cambridge** *(right)* **in front of Cambridge station.**

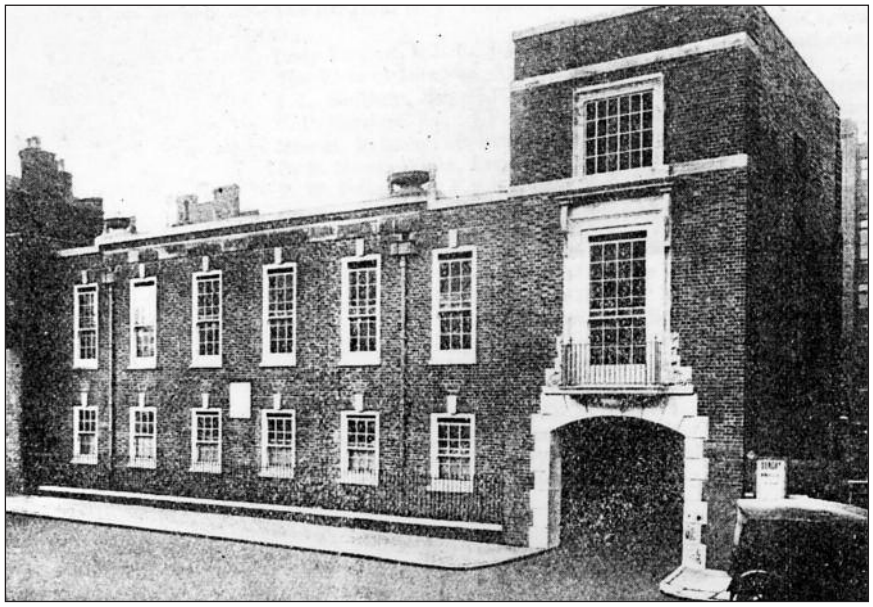
**Nearly 15,000 men of the Guards Division lost their lives and this impressive monument (*left*) was erected on the western side of Horse Guards Parade. The figures of the five Guardsmen were cast from captured German cannon (NIWM 11359).**

***Right:*** **The Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner provoked much controversy as Mr C. S. Jagger's representation of a 9-inch howitzer was deemed by some to be neither accurate nor in good taste (NIWM 128).**

**Yet guns and tanks were used as memorials. This ceremony was held at Artillery House, Stratford, in 1924. Both house and gun have since disappeared but other artillery pieces, dedicated as memorials can be seen at Redman Park, Beamish (NIWM 10162) and on a hilltop at Twyn-y-Garth, Llandeilo Graban, Powys (NIWM 37231).**

***Left:*** **The government also donated surplus tanks to towns and cities in recognition of their efforts in buying War Bonds and War Saving Certificates. No. 148 is a male Mk IV with 57mm guns although female types, i.e. those armed solely with machine guns, were usually selected because there were more of them!**

***Right:*** **Of the 265 Mk IVs delivered, only this example presented to Ashford on August 1, 1919 survives today. Most were scrapped as unwelcome reminders of the horrors of war before or during the Second World War. No. 245 can still be seen parked next to a pub in Park Street although it is now protected against the elements by an overhead canopy (NIWM 43725).**



**Some communities chose to spend money subscribed by the public for a local war memorial on more practical purposes, particularly on the establishment of War Memorial Hospitals.** *Left:* **This example in the Borough of Islington, stood on Tollington Way in north London.** *Right:* **When the building was demolished, the entrance was preserved (NIWM 12057).**

In addition, a whole array of utilitarian memorials appeared: hospitals, parks gardens, playing fields, halls, almost always with the names of the fallen displayed prominently. Many communities were divided by quite bitter arguments about the relative merits of monumental and utilitarian memorials, the latter quite often being favoured by returning veterans.

Hospitals present unique problems as, although 'useful' by 1920s standards, many have now reached the end of their useful life, and it is hard to strike a balance between the utilitarian and commemorative functions of the memorials. Many are now threatened with demolition. A particularly creative solution was arrived at for the Royal Northern Hospital in Holloway, North London. Although the hospital itself was demolished in 1997 and replaced by housing, the arch was retained and sympathetically integrated into the new development. The names of 1,337 Islington men who lost their lives are inscribed on the walls within the arch. The memorial, actually the whole casualty department, was unveiled by HRH The Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VIII) on November 27, 1923.

Perhaps the most significant element of any memorial was the nominal roll, the element which made every war memorial unique, however pedestrian its design. Some memorials

Lt JOHN KIPLING
2 IRISH GDS: 29 SEP 1915: AGE 18
Boy R.N. WILLIAM LANGRIDGE
R.N. BARRACKS 7 NOV 1918: AGE 16
Pte JOHN C. LINGHAM
R SUSSEX 7 JULY 1918: AGE 30

were models of egalitarianism, in keeping with the spirit of the Imperial War Graves Commission and the mood of the time. So, at Burwash, Rudyard Kipling's son John is listed in the alphabetical nominal roll, between Private William Keeley of the Northumberland Fusiliers and 16-year-old Boy William Langridge, who died at the Royal Navy's training establishment for boy seamen, HMS *Ganges,* in 1918 (NIWM 10059).

Many affluent families ensured that their offspring were commemorated separately as well as on the local war memorial. Nearly 11,000 of these individual memorials have been recorded by the Inventory to date, compared to over 32,000 'community' memorials. Perhaps the most extravagant example of an individual memorial commemorates Lieutenant Edward Horner of the 18th Hussars, who died of wounds at Noyelles on November 21, 1917. Located in the parish church at Mells, Somerset, it is a full-size equestrian figure by Sir Alfred Munnings, with a lengthy Latin inscription (NIWM 1386).

**In an outpouring of national grief in an attempt to assuage the loss of a million men, both rich and poor remembered their loved ones according to their station . . . be it a life-size mounted horseman in Somerset . . . or a simple mantlepiece display in a terrace house. All served . . . and all paid the supreme sacrifice.**

**But of all those who were lost, no death touched the heart of every single person in the nation like that of Edith Louisa Cavell, executed by the Germans on October 12, 1915. Trained as a nurse at the London Hospital, the outbreak of the First World War found her in the post of Matron of a new, large secular hospital and training school in the process of being built in the Brussels suburb of Uccle. Violation of Belgium's neutrality on August 13, 1914 led Britain to declare war on Germany the following day. All the British nurses in Belgium were ordered home but Edith and a few colleagues stayed behind to care for the wounded . . . of both sides . . . but when she helped two British soldiers return through the lines in September, the emphasis of her caring changed. With the help of her architect friend Phillipe Baucq, Edith built up an escape organisation which eventually helped over 200 Allied soldiers cross the frontier into neutral Holland. However, German suspicions were aroused and they were both arrested. In October 1915 they were brought before a military tribunal together with 25 colleagues who were implicated in the organisation. Edith did not deny her guilt and she, Phillipe Baucq and three others were sentenced to death. Early on October 12 she was driven from the prison at St Gilles to the Belgian National Shooting Gallery on the eastern outskirts of the capital and lined up in front of a firing squad. Although Edith had admitted her guilt, the execution of a woman — and a nurse at that — aroused profound anti-German feelings around the world, fuelled by reports in the Amsterdam *De Telegraaf* that she had first been forced to witness the execution of Phillipe and that the firing squad had all deliberately shot to miss her so that the officer in charge had had to administer the coup de grâce.** *Above right:* **In April 1919, a memorial was established on the site where a total of 35 persons had been shot during the First World War.**

*Above:* **The memorial was destroyed by the Germans in 1940 when the range was once again used for executions, over 260 bodies being identified after the war. Although the shooting gallery has since been demolished to build a Belgian television studio complex, a Cemetery of Honour — complete with the old preserved stop-butt and a replacement WWI memorial plaque — has been retained on what is now Rue Colonel Bourg.** *Below:* **Edith Cavell's body was returned to Britain in May 1919 and buried in the shadows of Norwich Cathedral.**

**Memorials to Edith Cavell were established around the world. Apart from one in Brussels outside her former hospital, the people of Canada named a mountain after her and New Zealanders, a bridge. There are seven Cavell entries on the database, her memorial in London being this imposing statue by Sir George Frampton (NIWM 11538) standing at the junction of Charing Cross Road and St Martin's Lane. It is inscribed with her immortal words: 'Patriotism is not enough; I must have no hatred or bitterness for anyone'.**

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The war memorials of the First World War were a unique phenomenon reflecting a unique war. No equivalent spontaneous mass commemoration took place in the country either before or after, despite the fact that little more than 20 years after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Britain was once more at war with Germany.

The armed forces of 1939-45 were as extensive as those of 1914-18, and casualties, although lower, still ran to around a quarter of a million. Nevertheless, the commemorative activity which followed the Second World War was much more muted, perhaps due partly to an increased cynicism, a sense that the memorials of 1919 had utterly failed to prevent a repeat catastrophe.

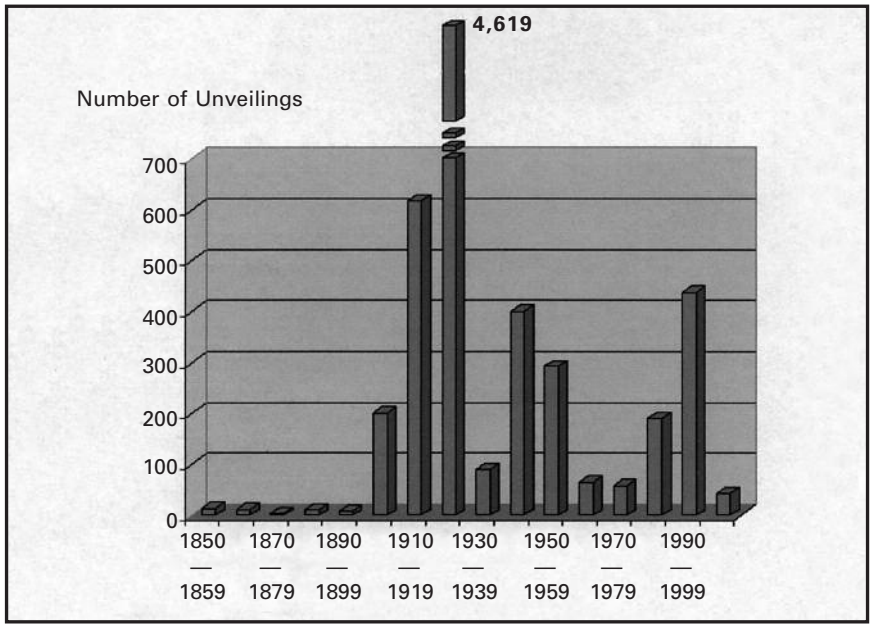
One such cynical view was recorded for the Mass Observation Bulletin of 1944, a kind of 1940's 'focus group':

'Most of the last war memorials bear inscriptions to the effect that those of that day were satisfied that it was "the war to end war". We of this day will, I am sure, be alive to the necessity of putting our hopes into words. Therefore I would suggest that on each memorial there should be placed a neat plaque saying — "this sacrifice was not enough. Another was called for — and was made". Care should be taken to leave room for the plaque that will be necessary about 30 years hence'

Almost as an afterthought, many communities simply added the new names to existing First World War memorials; some did nothing at all.

The Second World War generation were also far more passionate supporters of utilitarian commemoration, as shown again by anonymous comments recorded for Mass Observation. The 1944 Bulletin opens with a paragraph headed 'No Stone Memorials' and goes on to argue that 'most people wanted a memorial which would be useful or give pleasure to those who outlive the war'.

Typical of the comments is this, attributed to 'a civil servant': 'Anything but monuments. Memorial funds for scholarships or charity, memorial utility buildings, but not absolutely useless and often ugly memorials'.

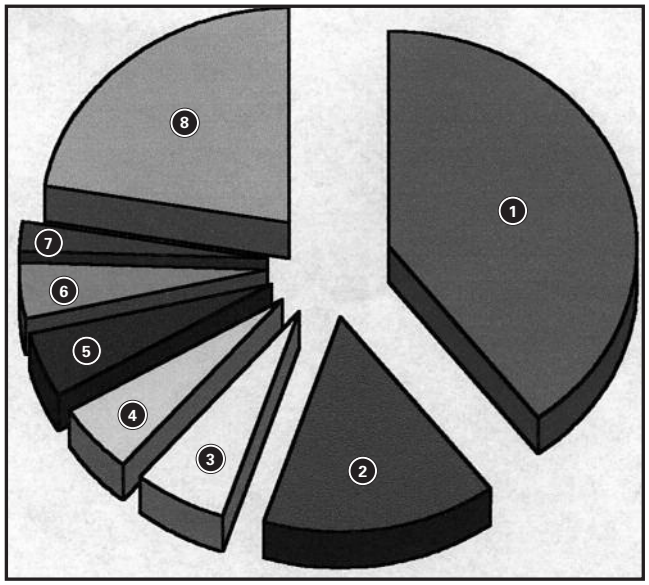


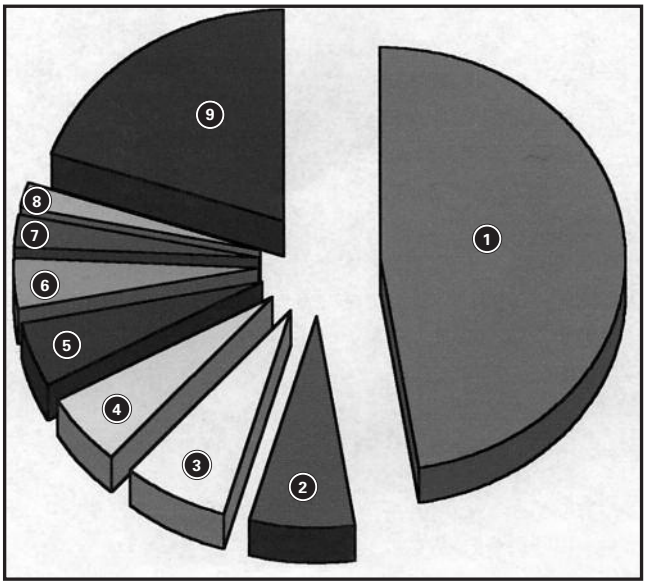

**The compilation of the National Inventory has produced some remarkable statistics. This chart shows the proportion of unveilings split up in decades: 1900-09, 202; 1910-19, 617; 1920-29, 4619; 1930-39, 90; 1940-49, 400; 1950-59, 293; 1960-69, 66; 1970-79, 58; 1980-89, 191; 1990-99, 438 and 2000 to date 44.**

As far as a national war memorial was concerned, the Government's decision reflected the mood of the nation. Arguably the most significant memorial created after the Second World War turned out to be the Land Fund, which was created from surplus war funds in 1946 as a memorial to the dead of both World Wars. In terms of symbolic commemoration, the nation settled for simply adding the years '1939-1945' to the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

In addition the now-renamed Commonwealth War Graves Commission accepted responsibility for constructing new cemeteries and Memorials to the Missing, such as the magnificent Royal Air Force memorial to the missing at Cooper's Hill, Runnymede. The cloister was designed by Sir Edward Maufe and it was unveiled by HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 (NIWM 23270).

**'If I climb up into heaven Thou art there: If I go down to hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there also shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me.' The words from Psalm 139 etched on the beautiful north-facing window overlooking the historic fields of Runnymede form an evocative theme for the Air Forces Memorial opened by HM The Queen on October 17, 1953. The memorial was quickly awarded the Bronze Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects for the best building erected in the south of England since the war.**




**FIRST WORLD WAR**

| | MemorialType | % of WW1 |
|---|---|---|
| [1] | BOARD/PLAQUE/TABLET | 39.8% |
| [2] | CROSS | 15.1% |
| [3] | ADDITION TO GRAVESTONE | 6.2% |
| [4] | ROLL OF HONOUR OR BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE | 5.4% |
| [5] | WINDOW | 4.8% |
| [6] | UNIDENTIFIED | 4.3% |
| [7] | OBELISK | 2.3% |
| [8] | SUNDRY (all below 2%) | 22.1% |

**SECOND WORLD WAR**

| | MemorialType | % of WW2 |
|---|---|---|
| [1] | BOARD/PLAQUE/TABLET | 47.5% |
| [2] | ROLL OF HONOUR OR BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE | 7.1% |
| [3] | ADDITION TO GRAVESTONE | 6.9% |
| [4] | WINDOW | 5.6% |
| [5] | CHURCH FABRIC/FITTINGS | 5.0% |
| [6] | UNIDENTIFIED | 3.7% |
| [7] | STONE OF REMEMBRANCE | 2.5% |
| [8] | OTHER MEMORIAL | 2.0% |
| [9] | SUNDRY (all below 2%) | 19.7% |

Throughout the country, local commemoration of the Second World War was much more practical and understated than that of the First, reflecting the sentiments expressed in the Mass Observation Bulletin. In Appleby, Cumbria, for instance, the Second World War memorial (NIWM 3062) is a swimming pool. The 'Names of the Fallen' were still important, but were often quietly added to existing First World War memorials. These additional inscriptions were muted and often confined to a simple addition: 'and also the World War 1939-1945'.

**The question has been argued many times for and against the view: should memorials be useful . . . or decorative?** *Above:* **Appleby-in-Westmorland chose the former and built their local swimming pool as a memorial whereas the Polish Air Force followed traditional thinking with their formal tribute at Northolt** *(left)*.

A few new free-standing outdoor memorials were constructed after the Second World War. However, in most cases these could be loosely categorised as official or semi-official projects sanctioned and paid for by the nation or the military. Very few were spontaneously erected by communities. One of the best-known examples is the Polish Air Force Memorial at RAF Northolt, the work of the exiled Polish sculptor Mieczyslaw Lubelski, which was unveiled on November 2, 1948 by Lord Tedder (NIWM 2276).

Practicality and understated restraint remained the dominant characteristic of Second World War commemoration for many years. However, the 1980s and 1990s saw an unprecedented desire to construct more permanent and obvious memorials relating to the Second World War, and a wave of new construction has taken place during the last 20 years.

## REPORT No. 1

| Memorial Type | Number | % of total |
|---|---|---|
| BOARD/PLAQUE/TABLET | 18397 | 42.5% |
| CROSS | 4789 | 11.1% |
| ADDITION TO GRAVESTONE | 2554 | 5.9% |
| WINDOW | 2324 | 5.4% |
| ROLL OF HONOUR OR BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE | 2260 | 5.2% |
| UNIDENTIFIED | 2196 | 5.1% |
| CHURCH FABRIC/FITTINGS | 1126 | 2.6% |
| OBELISK | 789 | 1.8% |
| STONE OF REMEMBRANCE | 518 | 1.2% |
| HALL | 504 | 1.2% |
| PILLAR/COLUMN | 495 | 1.1% |
| OTHER MEMORIAL | 477 | 1.1% |
| GATE | 438 | 1.0% |
| REREDOS OR SCREEN | 410 | 0.9% |
| CROSS - BATTLEFIELD | 364 | 0.8% |
| SERVICEMAN/WOMAN | 362 | 0.8% |
| OTHER STRUCTURE | 325 | 0.8% |
| COMPOSITE | 302 | 0.7% |
| CENOTAPH | 286 | 0.7% |
| CHAPEL | 286 | 0.7% |
| ALLEGORY(EG: VICTORY) | 273 | 0.6% |
| SHRINE | 258 | 0.6% |
| FLAG/BANNER | 246 | 0.6% |
| CLOCK OR CLOCK TOWER | 241 | 0.6% |
| TRIPTYCH | 218 | 0.5% |
| ORGAN OR ORGAN PART | 217 | 0.5% |
| SEAT | 209 | 0.5% |
| GARDEN | 200 | 0.5% |
| TREE OR AVENUE | 191 | 0.4% |
| TROPHY/RELIC | 173 | 0.4% |
| BELLS OR BELL TOWER | 162 | 0.4% |
| SCULPTURED/CAST FIGURE | 155 | 0.4% |
| WALL | 141 | 0.3% |
| PARK/SPORTS FIELD | 137 | 0.3% |
| CROSS - CWGC | 117 | 0.3% |
| SCULPTURED/CAST GROUP | 116 | 0.3% |
| PAINTING/PRINT | 109 | 0.3% |
| PHOTOGRAPH | 103 | 0.2% |
| LAMP OR LIGHTING | 100 | 0.2% |
| LECTERN | 100 | 0.2% |
| FONT OR FONT COVER | 88 | 0.2% |
| ALTAR | 83 | 0.2% |
| HOSPITAL/CLINIC | 79 | 0.2% |
| ENDOWED BED | 56 | 0.1% |
| MOSAIC/MURAL | 54 | 0.1% |
| CAIRN | 45 | 0.1% |
| SHELTER | 45 | 0.1% |
| SPORTS PAVILION | 39 | 0.1% |
| STREET | 38 | 0.1% |
| SUNDIAL | 37 | 0.1% |
| FOUNTAIN | 30 | 0.1% |
| ANIMAL FIGURE | 18 | 0.0% |
| CIVILIAN(EG: MAN,WOMAN,CHILD) | 13 | 0.0% |
| ARCH | 12 | 0.0% |

**The many different types of memorial which exist in the UK can now be analysed using a variety of reports from the database.**

## REPORT No. 3

| MemorialType | WW1 | WW2 | % of WW1 | % of WW2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ADDITION TO GRAVESTONE | 1860 | 537 | 6.2% | 6.9% |
| ALLEGORY(EG: VICTORY) | 222 | 25 | 0.7% | 0.3% |
| ALTAR | 60 | 15 | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| ANIMAL FIGURE | 10 | 4 | 0.0% | 0.1% |
| ARCH | 9 | 1 | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| BELLS OR BELL TOWER | 100 | 47 | 0.3% | 0.6% |
| BOARD/PLAQUE/TABLET | 11883 | 3706 | 39.8% | 47.5% |
| CAIRN | 21 | 21 | 0.1% | 0.3% |
| CENOTAPH | 265 | 6 | 0.9% | 0.1% |
| CHAPEL | 189 | 62 | 0.6% | 0.8% |
| CHURCH FABRIC/FITTINGS | 616 | 392 | 2.1% | 5.0% |
| CIVILIAN(EG: MAN,WOMAN,CHILD) | 7 | 2 | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| CLOCK OR CLOCK TOWER | 182 | 43 | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| COMPOSITE | 228 | 33 | 0.8% | 0.4% |
| CROSS | 4505 | 103 | 15.1% | 1.3% |
| CROSS - BATTLEFIELD | 345 | 6 | 1.2% | 0.1% |
| CROSS - CWGC | 104 | 11 | 0.3% | 0.1% |
| ENDOWED BED | 44 | 7 | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| FLAG/BANNER | 76 | 55 | 0.3% | 0.7% |
| FONT OR FONT COVER | 53 | 27 | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| FOUNTAIN | 21 | | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| GARDEN | 85 | 85 | 0.3% | 1.1% |
| GATE | 340 | 75 | 1.1% | 1.0% |
| HALL | 407 | 60 | 1.4% | 0.8% |
| HOSPITAL/CLINIC | 71 | 5 | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| LAMP OR LIGHTING | 38 | 56 | 0.1% | 0.7% |
| LECTERN | 56 | 38 | 0.2% | 0.5% |
| MOSAIC/MURAL | 44 | 4 | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| OBELISK | 680 | 25 | 2.3% | 0.3% |
| ORGAN OR ORGAN PART | 134 | 76 | 0.4% | 1.0% |
| OTHER MEMORIAL | 234 | 157 | 0.8% | 2.0% |
| OTHER STRUCTURE | 206 | 70 | 0.7% | 0.9% |
| PAINTING/PRINT | 69 | 22 | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| PARK/SPORTS FIELD | 84 | 44 | 0.3% | 0.6% |
| PHOTOGRAPH | 78 | 21 | 0.3% | 0.3% |
| PILLAR/COLUMN | 402 | 35 | 1.3% | 0.4% |
| REREDOS OR SCREEN | 324 | 62 | 1.1% | 0.8% |
| ROLL OF HONOUR OR BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE | 1600 | 552 | 5.4% | 7.1% |
| SCULPTURED/CAST FIGURE | 75 | 11 | 0.3% | 0.1% |
| SCULPTURED/CAST GROUP | 72 | 7 | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| SEAT | 65 | 82 | 0.2% | 1.1% |
| SERVICEMAN/WOMAN | 280 | 20 | 0.9% | 0.3% |
| SHELTER | 29 | 15 | 0.1% | 0.2% |
| SHRINE | 252 | 4 | 0.8% | 0.1% |
| SPORTS PAVILION | 28 | 11 | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| STONE OF REMEMBRANCE | 225 | 196 | 0.8% | 2.5% |
| STREET | 22 | 14 | 0.1% | 0.2% |
| SUNDIAL | 23 | 11 | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| TAPESTRY | 2 | 4 | 0.0% | 0.1% |
| TREE OR AVENUE | 42 | 111 | 0.1% | 1.4% |
| TRIPTYCH | 203 | 9 | 0.7% | 0.1% |
| TROPHY/RELIC | 75 | 56 | 0.3% | 0.7% |
| UNIDENTIFIED | 1295 | 290 | 4.3% | 3.7% |
| WALL | 85 | 37 | 0.3% | 0.5% |

**These two examples show breakdowns, first by type, and then split between the First and Second World Wars.**

An ideal location for many new war memorials has been the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire, a 150-acre area of woodland set aside for a wide range of commemorative projects (see *After the Battle* No. 114).

Although largely the results of local campaigns and fund raising initiatives, these memorials tend to be the work of veterans groups and other interested parties rather than a broad cross-section of a community. The war in the air, bombing, war work, and the elaborate preparations for the Second Front, meant that the Second World War was fought in (or often over) Great Britain to a far greater extent than was the First, and consequently many of these more recent memorials commemorate locations such as airfields, camps or aircraft crash sites, or specific events and operations, rather than the names of the fallen. Rather than providing a link between British communities and distant battlefields in foreign countries, these more recent memorials therefore often provide a direct link between the reader and history — to a very great extent they represent a tangible symbol of what comes 'after the battle'.

For instance, on October 23, 1998, a restored Cromwell tank was unveiled at Thetford Forest, Norfolk to commemorate the 7th Armoured Division, the famous 'Desert Rats'. The memorial marks the location of High Ash Camp, where the division spent the first months of 1944, preparing for D-Day.

**The memory of the Desert Rats remembered in this very appropriate memorial beside the A1065 a mile north of Mundford, near Thetford in Norfolk (NIWM 19590).**

The following case studies have been prepared by UKNIWM staff to illustrate in more detail how war memorials can enable the visitor to touch the past.

## COMMANDO WAR MEMORIAL

On top of a barren hill, 600 feet high just outside Spean Bridge, on the main road from Fort William to Inverness, Highland, stands the simple yet striking memorial to the Commando Forces of the Second World War. It commands a magnificent view of the valley of the River Spean, Ben Nevis to the south and the whole western end of the Great Glen.

The memorial was subscribed for by the people of Scotland as a tribute to the exploits of Commando soldiers of all nationalities and for those who gave their lives in the war. The site for this memorial was chosen because it is in the area where 35,000 officers and men of the Commandos trained during the Second World War.

The memorial consists of three Commando figures in bronze, each nine foot tall, standing on a plinth of Scottish Whinstone, and in full battle dress with rifles slung across their shoulders. Great strength is portrayed in the figures by size and by deliberate carelessness of clothes, baggy battle dress, enormous boots and battered untidiness of balaclava hats. The faces are those of tired, but purposeful men, rough-hewn and determined.

The memorial was designed by Scott Sutherland of the Dundee School of Art and made by the firm of H. H. Martyn Ltd, a company of art craftsmen founded in 1888 which made fine items in wood, stone and marble carving, decorative plaster work, wrought iron, stained glass, cast bronze, sculpture, furniture and cabinet making, including many memorials commemorating the casualties of the First World War. Unfortunately, as taste changed and pressure grew to reduce the cost of new buildings and decorative items, the demand for work of the quality produced by H. H. Martyn Ltd declined, and the firm finally closed in the 1970s. The figures were cast in bronze, with sand used as the moulding material, and the memorial took 12 months to complete in the foundry.

The memorial was unveiled on September 27, 1952 by HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Among those present was Lord Lovat, Major-General R. A. Laycock, former Chief of Combined Operations, Colonel C. E. Vaughan, former Commanding Officer of the Commando Basic Training Centre, and military representatives of the Allies. It was estimated that 5,000 spectators were present, including many former Commandos, the largest gathering in the district since Prince Charles Edward Stuart raised the Standard in nearby Glenfinnan in 1745. In his speech Lord Lovat said that the men represented by the skill of the sculptor were just the sort of men he would like to have with him on a beach-head. He said that the first Commandos were raised from volunteers and were ill-equipped, without boats or aircraft, but they had skill and determination. He continued:

'They ended the war as possibly the most formidable striking force in the Allied armies, fighting in Europe and the Far East. The names of those who fell can be traced from the Arctic Circle down into the steaming jungles of Burma and Malaya'

The name Commando was originally given to groups of Boer raised on electoral districts to fight the British army during the South African War (1899-1902). Their actions were marked by lightning guerrilla raids that helped prolong the war. At the beginning of the Second World War the British adopted these ideas with the formation of guerrilla companies which later came to be known as Independent Companies recruited from volunteers, designed as a self-contained shipborne unit for amphibious operations. Several ICs fought in Norway 1940 and had the order by demolition and harrying tactics to impede any German advance.

**Overlooking much of the barren landscape over which many of the Commandos trained, their memorial (NIWM 5894) was unveiled in September 1952 'In memory of the officers and men of the Commandos who died in the Second World War 1939-1945. This country was their training ground'.**

After the Fall of France Churchill insisted on maintaining the offensive spirit and called for the creation of raiding forces of, say, 1,000 up to no less than 10,000 men, following this up two days later by demanding 'Enterprises . . . with specially trained troops of the hunter class, who can develop a reign of terror first of all on the "butcher and bolt" policy'. From this emerged the Commandos 'hit and run' hand-picked guerrilla forces, to be dropped by parachute or landed by boat or submarine to strike at the enemy on their own ground. The first Army Commandos were formed in June 1940, followed by the first volunteer Royal Marine Commando Units in February 1942.

Until 1942 each Commando was responsible for its own training, which inevitably produced wide variations in kind and standard. For this reason, in February 1942, training was standardised and centralised with the creation at Achnacarry House (some miles to the north-west of the site of the Commando Memorial), the home of Cameron of Lochiel, of the Commando Basic Training Centre. The commandant was Lieutenant-Colonel Vaughan and from then on all Commandos passed through the Achnacarry course where they learnt the skills of unarmed combat, weapons usage, assault courses, field survival, how to construct a rope bridge, endured the Speed March, and practised opposed landings, rock climbing, abseiling and night attack as well as many other skills.

As well as the Army and Royal Marine Commandos, Royal Naval Commandos (sometimes known as Beachhead Commandos) also learnt many of their skills at Achnacarry. Scotland was also the site for the Commando Mountain and Snow Warfare Training Camp established at Braemar. Achnacarry was also used as a training site for US Rangers. It was officially disbanded once the war was over.

Here the Army, Royal Marine and Royal Navy Commandos received the much coveted green beret along with the famous F-S dagger from Colonel Vaughan at a special parade.

**Lieutenant-Colonel Geoffrey Keyes lost his life in a vain attempt to kill or capture Erwin Rommel in November 1941. On Rommel's orders, he was buried with full military honours alongside the four Germans killed during the raid on Beda Littoria. The Germans incorrectly accorded him the rank of major on his battlefield grave, the 'VC MC' being added by his brother Roger when he visited it in the autumn of 1943. The small cemetery lay on rising ground about a mile from the village.**

## LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GEOFFREY KEYES VC, MC

Whilst the archive has records of many regimental memorials, there are also numerous memorials that have been erected to individuals. Some are quite basic with just a few lines of text whilst some, typically those of the 19th century, are more prosaic. In some cases, they can be quite unusual and this is shown in this example – the memorial for Lieutenant-Colonel Geoffrey Keyes VC, MC which takes the form of his battlefield cross. What is unusual about it is that it is a Second World War battlefield cross, one of only six recorded on the database by comparison to the 345 recorded for the First World War.

Geoffrey Keyes was the son of Admiral Sir R. J. B. Keyes, both of whom died during the Second World War. Admiral Keyes was the first Chief of Combined Operations who died on December 26, 1945 as a result of injuries received on active service in the Far East. His son, Geoffrey Keyes, predeceased him when he was killed whilst leading the raid on what was believed to be Rommel's headquarters in Libya. His father at that time was in charge of directing all Commando operations from the headquarters of Combined Operations.

The raid itself was just one part of a plan code-named Operation 'Flipper'. Throughout 1941 the German army in North Africa had achieved considerable success. The British forces under Wavell had failed to beat the Germans and relieve Tobruk which led to increasing exasperation on the part of Churchill. He eventually relieved Wavell of command and replaced him with Lieutenant-General Sir Claude Auchinleck in July 1941.

Once he had arrived to take up his new post, Auchinleck spent time building up the army which had been defeated by Rommel and insisted, despite Churchill wanting immediate action, that no offensive should be undertaken until everything was ready.

The new offensive was planned meticulously and the attack, named 'Crusader', was planned for November 1941. Its intention was for the Eighth Army to outflank Rommel and then go north and link up with the Australian forces in Tobruk. In addition to this, Auchinleck also planned two ambitious special assignments. In the hours before the offensive began a group of Commandos would land by submarine on the Libyan coast and then attempt to reach Rommel's headquarters and either kill or capture him. It was felt that if Rommel was killed or captured at the same time as the 'Crusader' attacks commenced, the German command system would be thrown into chaos to the benefit of the main British offensive. At the same time, another unit would be parachuted in further east to infiltrate a key German airfield and destroy as many of the planes parked there as they could. Once their job was complete, members of the Long Range Desert Group would collect them, as well as any members of Keyes' unit who could not make it back to the submarines, from a prearranged point.

The Commandos chosen for the job to kill or capture Rommel had been part of a contingent named Layforce under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Laycock. Whilst the contingent had been disbanded soon after landing one of its units, No. 11 (Scottish) Commando, had continued to train and practice night landings from

LIEUTENANT COLONEL
GEOFFREY C. T. KEYES
VC., MC., CROIX DE GUERRE
THE ROYAL SCOTS GREYS
NO II (SCOTTISH) COMMANDO
18TH NOVEMBER 1941 AGE 24
KILLED LEADING THE RAID ON
GENERAL ROMMEL'S H.Q. SIDI RAFA
SON OF ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
THE LORD KEYES

**In August 1944 Geoffrey's body was reburied in Benghazi War Cemetery. At the same time, the wooden cross which had marked his grave was sent to England to be placed in the family church at Tingewick, three miles west of Buckingham. (CWGC)**

submarines. Lieutenant-Colonel Keyes was in charge of these folbotists (so called because the light-weight canvas boats they used to reach the shore from the submarine were called folbots). Keyes, then aged 24, was a well-regarded and competent officer who had been educated at Eton and Sandhurst and had served in the Royal Scots Greys and he had insisted that he should lead the raid on Rommel's headquarters.

However, unbeknown to everyone, the mission was doomed to failure. By the time the decision had been made to carry out the attack intelligence believed that it had been able to pinpoint Rommel's headquarters beyond a shadow of a doubt. Captain J. E. Haselden, one of the most successful British intelligence agents in the desert, had been parachuted behind enemy lines in October to find Rommel's HQ. Radio intercepts of German traffic had led British intelligence to believe that it was located close to a village called Beda Littoria so Haselden kept watch on the village. His observations showed that the village was full of German troops and he seemed to have struck gold when Rommel emerged from the Prefettura, the official building in the village. Haselden then rendezvoused with vehicles of the Long Range Desert Group and took the information back to Cairo.

Little did they know that, whilst the Prefettura had temporarily been Rommel's HQ, it was now occupied by the Afrikakorps Quartermaster General's department. When Haselden had spotted him, Rommel was only on a routine visit to the staff group and his headquarters were now much closer to the fighting. Also, Rommel himself was not even in North Africa. He had actually flown back to Italy two weeks earlier for a rest and to celebrate his 50th birthday.

The British, however, knew nothing about this and so the Commandos continued with their mission. Four days before the start of 'Crusader', two submarines from which they would be landed had taken up position off the Libyan coast. T2 patrol of the Long Range Desert Group had already dropped off Haselden, two British officers and their group of Arab agents to both guide the Commandos to Rommel's headquarters and carry out sabotage missions of their own. When they sent out the signal to say they were in position the Commandos began to launch their folbots. However, the sea had grown rough and only a fraction of the force could leave the submarine before launching had to be suspended. Plans were adapted in the light of the smaller attacking force and those who did make it to shore headed inland to Beda Littoria, around 12 miles south of the coast. They spent the next two days hiding in the rough country north of the village, their concealment helped by the foul weather which had made landing so difficult.

In the early hours of November 18, they launched their attack but it soon turned to disaster. After killing a German sentry, they burst through the door of the Prefettura. Their opening fire killed the duty officer but the noise roused the German troops asleep elsewhere in the building. As he ducked aside to allow one of his men to throw a grenade, Keyes was shot just above the heart and by the time his comrades could get him outside he was dead. His second-in-command was also wounded so the rest of the party decided to retreat, but not before blowing up a generator and some vehicles. However, most of the party were captured and the raid became an unmitigated failure. The other raiding parties also achieved little success and the whole action achieved negligible gains at a high cost, mirroring the eventual failure of 'Crusader'.

When Rommel returned to North Africa and found out about the attempt on his life he saw to it that Keyes, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions, was buried with full military honours next to the four German soldiers who had been killed in his raid. The cross that was placed above Keyes' grave is now in Tingewick Parish Church, along with a memorial tablet commemorating both him and his father. Keyes himself is now buried in Benghazi War Cemetery, Libya.

**Sir Roger Keyes, whose leadership in the St George's Day raid on Zeebrugge in 1917 was an inspiration for the combined operations carried out in World War II, died on December 26, 1945. The Glider Pilot Regiment provided a Guard of Honour for the coffin as it lay in Tingewell church; nearby, fixed to the wall above his seat, was the cross removed from Geoffrey's grave, now recorded in the Inventory as NIWM 8096. (Admiral Keyes was buried in the 'Zeebrugge Plot' in St James's Cemetery at Dover.)**

**HMS *Paladin* *(above)* and HMS *Petard* *(below)* were both Onslow class destroyers built under the war construction programme and launched in 1941. *Petard* gained the unique distinction of being involved in the sinking of submarines from three countries Britain was at war with. These were the German U-boat *U-559* in October 1942; the Italian sub *Uarsciek* which sank whilst under tow December 1942 following its capture, and the Japanese submarine *I-27*.**

## WOMEN'S TRANSPORT SERVICE (FANY) MEMORIAL

The vast majority of memorials understandably commemorate men owing to their greater involvement on the front line but there are occasions when women feature on a memorial. One example is the regimental memorial to the Women's Transport Service (WTS, but more commonly known as FANY) who, out of all the arms of the women's services, were involved more directly in combat through their role with the Special Operations Executive. This fact is reflected in the memorial erected at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, London (NIWM 40).

To look at, this memorial seems very much like all the others. Unveiled on May 7, 1948 by HRH Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, it is simple in design with a dedicatory inscription at the top and a list of names of the fallen below. But upon closer inspection it reveals a much more interesting story. In fact, there are a number of stories with familiar names like Violette Szabo GC (see *After the Battle* No. 86), Y. E. M. Beekman and A. R. Borrel commemorated on it. But what can easily be overlooked are the names of eight women who were members of the WTS (East Africa). Their presence on the memorial marks the worst Allied disaster involving servicewomen in any war to date when a total of 76 female personnel died when the transport ship they were on, SS *Khedive Ismail*, was sunk by torpedo on February 12, 1944.

The SS *Khedive Ismail* was sailing in convoy KR8 from Mobasa, Africa to Colombo, Ceylon. She had been requisitioned as a troopship on October 6, 1940 whilst she was docked in Bombay and was being used exclusively in the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf areas for the movement of troops to and from India and East Africa. For convoy KR8 she was carrying 1,511 people, approximately six times the number she was initially designed for. Those on board included 996 officers and men of the 301st Field Regiment, East African Artillery; 271 Royal Navy personnel (including 19 Wrens); 178 ship's crew; one matron with 53 nursing sisters and nine members of the FANY, including Lance-Corporal Gloria West. Their unit was being assigned to help the hospital services at the Royal Navy shore establishments in Ceylon.

The convoy, consisting of the *Khedive Ismail*, four other troop ships and four escorts including HMS *Hawkins*, departed on February 3, 1944. Captain R. C. Whiteman, commodore on board the *Khedive Ismail*, decided not to plot a zig-zag course as, not only would it would have meant an extra night at sea owing to the greater distance the course would create but the port of Colombo was closed at night so timing was everything. In the subsequent Board of Inquiry blame was placed on this decision for the sinking of the *Khedive Ismail*. But throughout the war different strategies had been adopted, for example ships in convoy using zig-zag or else ships travelling without convoy so his decision was not unusual. Captain John William Josselyn of HMS *Hawkins* had recommended an alternative strategy but had backed down, not before insisting that if it became advisable at any time during the voyage, zig-zag numbers 12 and 38 should be used.

The first few days of the convoy passed relatively peacefully. The three escorting ships, HMS *Honesty*, HMS *Sennen* and HMS *Lulworth*, left the convoy in the early hours of February 9 as they did not carry enough fuel for the whole journey but replacements, HMS *Petard* and HMS *Paladin*, were on their way from the east. They arrived on the morning of February 12 and took up their stations within the convoy. The only scare came when the Commodore made a signal to the convoy to say that oscillations had been heard from the south-east on a wavelength of 600 metres. However, the signal grew weaker as the ships moved in a north-westerly direction so any potential trouble was avoided.

The arrival of the new escorts on the morning of the 12th lifted morale amongst the convoy as it gave a certain reassurance for everyone's protection. Indeed, something akin to the feelings of a cruise had developed with a concert party arranged for lunchtime.

**Just names on a simple memorial tablet yet behind each one lies a story of heroism and self-sacrifice. And below the names of eight personnel of the Women's Transport Service who lost their lives in the worst single incident to befall Allied servicewomen in the Second World War: Sergeant Barbara Mary, Corporal Anne Calisher, Sergeant Constance H. Camerer, Sergeant Sonia Hook, Sergeant Barbara Kentish, Sergeant Florence Fairburn Moojen, Sergeant Beatrice Dunbar Thompson, Sergeant Patricia H. Le Poer Trench. All lost their lives when the SS *Khedive Ismail* was torpedoed. In this picture, the memorial has just been unveiled by Princess Alice, the Countess of Athlone, on May 7, 1948.**

On the deck a game of Tombolo (Bingo) had begun and it too had attracted a large crowd. However, this calm was soon shattered when, at 1433 (0903 GMT) there was a deep explosion in the centre of the ship followed seconds later by another, more violent explosion — the ship had received two torpedo hits, one in the engine room and one in the boiler room. The *Khedive Ismail* immediately started to list to starboard and within less than a minute the ship was on her beam ends, deepening by the stern and she began to break in half with the bow and stern lifting out of the water independently. It is estimated that it took only 1 minute 40 seconds for her to sink below the waves taking 1,297 of her passengers and crew with her, including Captain Whiteman.

Gloria West was one of the lucky ones and she was also the only member of the WTS (East Africa) to survive. When the torpedo struck she was sitting on the starboard side of the promenade deck with a good friend of hers, 'Tommy' Dunbar Thomson. The music from the concert had been drifting across the deck but it stopped abruptly after the first explosion. This was followed by absolute silence and then the second explosion which threw Gloria against the handrails. As the ship began to heel over she hesitated, wondering what to do but the appearance of a man next to her galvanised her into action. She shouted to him 'What shall I do?' and he told her to jump, setting an example by doing so himself. Gloria put her lifejacket on and shouted to Tommy who was still sitting in the same position. The sea was now about 25 feet below her and as she realised she had no other choice she jumped. Once in the turbulent water she swam away from the ship as fast as she could but her progress was constantly slowed by ropes and debris. She eventually managed to clear the sinking wreckage and watched as the ship turned upside down and disappeared. Her friend Tommy did not survive.

SS *Khedive Ismail* had been sunk by the Japanese submarine *I-27*. It was under the command of Captain Toshiaki Fukumura, Japan's top U-boat ace who was responsible for previously sinking 13 Allied ships. However, their attack on the *Khedive Ismail* was unusual as the Japanese commanders were under orders not to risk their boats. As a result, they rarely attacked well-armed convoys, preferring instead isolated unarmed merchantmen. Yet, either through over-confidence or the failure to see the full size of the convoy, they made their attack, firing four torpedoes, two of which narrowly missed the bows and the stern of the *Khedive Ismail*. One of these loose torpedoes almost struck HMS *Hawkins* but evasive action to port ensured that it missed.

Those who had been lucky enough to abandon the ship were now left to their own devices as the convoy was understandably dispersing from the scene as quickly as possible. *Hawkins* sailed away with the troop ships whilst *Petard* and *Paladin* moved in to deal with the submarine. Part of the events that followed are said to have inspired part of Nicholas Monserrat's novel *The Cruel Sea.* A series of contacts were reported and it soon became clear that the submarine was hiding under a small number of the scattered survivors who were on the outer fringes of flotsam. But the priority lay in attacking the submarine rather than rescuing survivors so *Petard* had to carry out its depth charge attacks despite the risk to those in the water. Those in the water did not realise what was happening until it was too late and they did not have time to get away. Dan Docwra was one of those in the water. 'When the depth charges went off, if you were facing them it felt as if you had been hit by a train; the same if you had your back to them, it felt like a kick in the spine.' Consequently, some were killed as a result of the underwater explosions. Soon though, contact was lost and *Paladin* was given permission to collect survivors and the whalers were lowered to rescue them.

As the last of the survivors were being plucked from the sea, the submarine suddenly and unexpectedly surfaced. However, initial jubilation turned to realisation that the Japanese were preparing to attack on the surface and *Petard* and *Paladin* turned to attack the submarine. *Paladin* attempted to ram it but she was ordered not to. However, the order to turn was delayed when it was drowned out by the noise of the guns firing on the submarine. Consequently, the forward hydrophone of the submarine struck the starboard side and tore a huge gash in her side leaving *Paladin* in danger of sinking. With one ship disabled a decision was made to launch a torpedo attack on the submarine as it was felt to be the only way to sink it. Each attempt failed but they finally got lucky with the seventh torpedo to be fired as it struck home and split the submarine in half. She followed the SS *Khedive Ismail* to the bottom of the sea three hours after the initial attack.

Those of the FANY who did not survive and are commemorated on the memorial include Sergeant Barbara Kentish, the daughter of Edgar and Clara Kentish who lived in Kemsing, Kent; and Sergeant Florence Fairburn Moojen, the daughter of Mr and Mrs E. Moojen of Cobham, Kent. They are both commemorated on their local memorials and their additional presence on the regimental memorial illustrates how many people who are commemorated can be on more than one memorial.

These examples are just some of the many memorials that commemorate operations abroad but the advent of 'Total War' created a significant number of Second World War memorials which commemorate events which occurred in the UK.

## CRASH SITE MEMORIALS

The massed air attacks of the Second World War brought the front line to many British communities for the first time, and it is perhaps not surprising that the UKNIWM collection includes several hundred memorials marking aircraft crash sites. They serve to illustrate many aspects of the air war, from the desperate fighting of 1940 to the bomber offensive on Germany. However, they also illustrate the dangers of simply taking to the air at a time when flying was a far more hazardous occupation than it is today: many crash site memorials mark deaths caused by weather, night flying or training accidents. The unifying factor is that, almost uniquely amongst British 20th century war memorials, they provide a direct link between the memorials and the historical events they commemorate. Some crash site memorials are even constructed from the remains of the aircraft involved, like the lonely memorial on the summit of Great Carrs in Cumbria, commemorating the crew of Halifax LL505 of No. 1659 Heavy Conversion Unit (NIWM 13028).

It is also probably no surprise to discover that many crash site memorials are sited at some of the most remote and lonely locations on the inventory database. Perhaps the loneliest of all is the memorial tablet in the little church on the island of St Kilda, the remotest part of the British Isles, located some 40 miles west of the Outer Hebrides (NIWM 6047). It commemorates the crews of three lost aircraft: Beaufighter LX798, Sunderland ML858 and, perhaps most poignant, 'unidentified aircraft believed to be a Wellington' (see *After the Battle* No. 30).

A few of these memorials even commemorate the enemy. At Linstead Parva, Suffolk, a simple scroll records the names of 'the last of sixty airmen of the Luftwaffe to die over Suffolk during the Second World War' (NIWM 5341). Oberfeldwebel Leo Zimmerman had attacked an American B24 which was landing at nearby Metfield airfield. In attempting to fly his Ju88G-6 night fighter beneath the bomber and bring his vertically-firing 20mm cannon to bear, his wing clipped the ground and he crashed, killing himself and his three crew. The intriguing aspect of this memorial was the late date of the incident in question: March 4, 1945, just two months before the end of the war, with Allied troops across the Rhine and Russian forces nearing Berlin.

A search of the inventory database led to the discovery of another Ju88 crew lost on the same night. Ju88G-6 D5 + AX, flown by Hauptman Johann Dreher, crashed into Dunnington Lodge Farm whilst turning to make a low-level attack on RAF Elvington, North Yorkshire, killing the crew and three members of the Moll family who lived in the farmhouse. On June 19, 1993 a small cross was erected at the site, commemorating the airmen and Richard, Ellen and Violet Moll (NIWM 30971). This memorial described the aircraft as 'believed to be the last Luftwaffe aircraft lost over the UK on a night sortie', a claim which the Linstead Parva memorial proves inaccurate. The inscription also illustrates an element of reconciliation perhaps only possible with the passage of time: 'the futility of war . . . now safe in God's hands'.

The database also revealed memorials commemorating RAF aircraft lost on the same night. Lancaster PB476 of No. 12 Squadron, flown by Flying Officer N. Andsell, was shot down at Ulceby Cross, Lincolnshire, 'the victim of a Luftwaffe intruder' (NIWM 43140). The incident report is brief (PRO AIR14/3052): 'Burnt very extensively. Crew all killed. Buried 10ft down. No information.'

Lancaster III ME442, flown by Pilot Officer J. J. Ryan, was 'shot down in flames by a Ju188' at Brocklesby Park, Lincolnshire, at 0115 hrs (NIWM 43049). Surviving wreckage here made the incident report more detailed.

**The database indicates that there are 222 memorials in the United Kingdom marking aircraft crash sites. This is one of the most remote — and unusual — in that pieces of Halifax LL505 have been utilised in its construction (NIWM 13028).**

An eyewitness to the crash apparently reported (PRO AIR14/3052) that the aircraft 'was seen only a few hundred feet up, blazing. There seemed to be an explosion and the burning part crashed almost vertically'. Most of the wreckage was again buried in a deep hole. The memorial takes the form of a tree struck by the aircraft when it crashed.

Simon Parry's book *Intruders over Britain*, together with *After the Battle*'s own *The Blitz Then and Now*, Volume 3, solved the mystery. Night 'intruder' raids on the UK began as early as 1940. The purpose of these operations was to catch RAF aircraft when they were at their most vulnerable, in the skies over their own airfields, and they were usually carried out by lone aircraft operating independently. The early operations were relatively small scale, and targets included not only operational bombers but also night fighters and aircraft on night navigational training flights.

Intruder sorties were called off as a result of a direct order from Adolf Hitler in October 1941, the Führer having decided that all efforts should be concentrated on Allied 'terror bombers' being brought down in front of the German civilians they were terrorising i.e. over Germany itself. The material success of these early operations seems debatable; according to Parry 91 Allied aircraft were shot down or damaged during the early period, but 78 intruders were also lost or damaged, either on operations or during training. However, the effect on British morale of being attacked so close to home may have been considerable.

Intruder raids resumed and expanded in mid-1943, in response to the parallel expansion of RAF and American bombing operations over Germany. Plans for a large-scale operation were laid down as early as October 1944, but it was not until the night of March 3/4, 1945 that the Luftwaffe launched Operation 'Gisela', an intruder raid of unprecedented scale, involving 142 Ju88G aircraft. The aim was to intercept around 500 Allied bombers returning from operations. The night fighters caused chaos; according to Parry 34 Allied aircraft were shot down, crashed or seriously damaged.

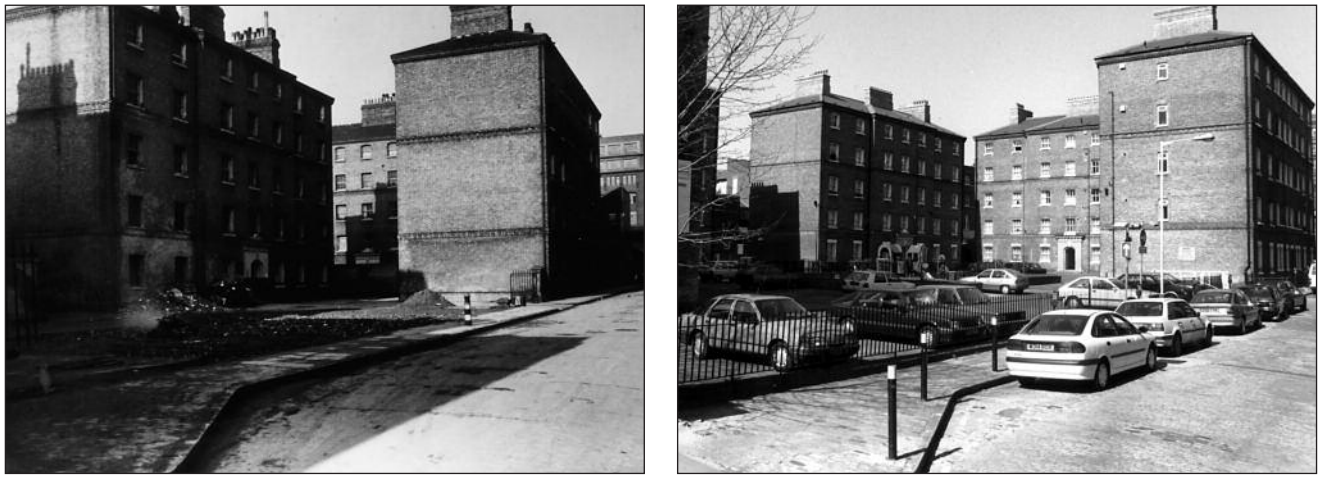
However, 'Gisela' was also very costly: although only three Ju88s were lost over Britain (including the two referred to above), more than 30 irreplaceable night fighters were lost or badly damaged either en route or on landing. The hoped-for strategic victory over Bomber Command was thus too costly and too late to be much more than the swansong of Luftwaffe operations over Britain.

The crash site memorials exemplify one of the most important features of war memorials: most have always been informal projects initiated and paid for by small groups of local people. Each of the crashes commemorated by these four memorials is presented as a local incident of relevance only to the community in which it took place. There is no sense of the 'big picture', no indication that the four events were related and were in fact part of a single action.

Those on the receiving end of the raiders were the civilians. Without any choice in the matter the front line was brought to them leaving a trail of destruction throughout many cities in the UK.

## PEABODY ESTATE WW2 MEMORIAL

**Most crash site memorials are informal and funded by private individuals who have researched the particular incident. This is memorial NIWM 30971 at Dunnington Lodge Farm where a Ju88 crashed during a low-level attack on RAF Elvington.**



**Peabody Buildings in John Fisher Street . . . then and now. This was one of the worst single incidents in the London Blitz.**

The Peabody Trust was established by George Peabody, described by some as 'The founder of Modern Philanthropy', and moved to London from the United States in 1837 to direct his business from the financial heart of the Victorian world. Peabody financed many projects in America to help educate and house the poor. His most dramatic benefaction in London was the establishment of the Peabody Trust to house the city's poor, which exists to this day, now housing over 27,000 people.

The Peabody Trust was advanced for the time in planning social housing and improved greatly on the slum dwellings which were present all over London throughout much of the 19th century, although many of the estate buildings were still quite densely packed. The Peabody Estate in Whitechapel, located on what is now called John Fisher Street (formerly Glasshouse Street), consisted of 12 blocks, A to L, and was opened in 1881. Families were able to rent one room for three shillings and three rooms for six shillings. The Trust's buildings in Whitechapel survived the First World War, but the Blitz of the Second World War was a different matter. The sustained bombing of the capital city from September 1940 until the summer of 1941 changed the face, and skyline, of London forever. The bombing was intense from the start and much damage was sustained during that September.

In preparation for the Second World War, provisions had been made on the Peabody Estate for air raid shelters for the forthcoming attacks from the enemy, as was the case all over London. On the evening of September 8, 1940, the Peabody Estate suffered severe damage in one of these air raids. There were 78, possibly 79 victims, who had been sheltering within the air raid shelter of Block K of the estate. The concentrated devastation had been so great that it had been difficult at the time to identify bodies, or indeed body parts, so an exact number of dead was not possible. Seventy-two of the victims, all but six of those killed, were buried in a mass grave in the City of London cemetery. Many of the families or family members who survived the raid were not informed of what had happened to their family, a common story during the chaos of the Blitz. Children orphaned as a result of that incident were sent away to live with relatives, elder children perhaps joined up at this time and moved away also. Often they were not told what had happened to their families.

One eyewitness account report was included in the *Peabody Times* coverage of the unveiling of the memorial, by Mr Francis Targett, who himself lost six members of his family in the raid. He escaped death when he decided to visit the local pub with his father, that evening. His father, a hospital worker, was due on duty at 10 p.m. and, not wishing to deviate from his routine, wanted to visit his local pub for a pint first. His mother begged him to return to the shelter, he told her he would return soon. For Francis Targett, this was a snap decision that saved his life. That was the last time he saw his family, as six members including his mother, brother, sister-in-law, niece, younger brother and brother's girlfriend were killed. Mr Targett remembered that he and his father had to deliver the bad news to the family of his brother's girlfriend, but he could not remember the woman's full name.

The memorial (NIWM 39889) was erected in conjunction with the bi-centenary of the birth of George Peabody in 1995, when each of the Peabody housing estates in London were given a monetary award to celebrate or mark the occasion in any way they saw fit. The caretaker of the Whitechapel estate at the time thought that a suitable memorial for the civilian victims of September 1940 would be fitting. There had never previously been any scene of commemoration to mark the tragedy. Archivists for the Peabody Trust were able to find many details of those killed through the trust's own records, not least detailed rent books. These held details such as names of head of household, occupations, previous addresses and so on. Eyewitness accounts of survivors were also vital to the research. The only unresolved query arose as a result of Mr Targett's brother's girlfriend. As this woman was not a tenant of the Peabody Trust, their records held no details. Mr Targett did not know her full name and as a consequence the Trust was unable to include her on this memorial. The Trust still has access to these records, and is always willing to help those tracing their family history.

Grateful when the commemorative tablet was erected, many of the survivors discovered for the first time where their relatives were buried. This allowed many to grieve for their family members for the first time in 55 years and showed again that commemoration, even after so many years, is important to those who lived through a time of conflict and lost as a consequence.

A simple, unadorned black granite tablet with white lettering was unveiled on December 21, 1995 by an 80-year-old tenant living on the Peabody Estate. The memorial is particularly poignant as it lists not only the names but also the ages of those who died, the youngest being just two months old, the eldest 78 years old. As a memorial to the fallen of the Second World War, it is perhaps in contrast to those memorials that record those who were killed in the service of their country. Yet it demonstrates the far-reaching effects of wartime in London, and the tragedies that civilians suffered. The tablet is mounted on the external wall of the estate office. The area itself has changed little overall since the war, perhaps the housing now less dense. The memorial serves as another reminder of the civilian casualties of the Blitz, and records an event which was repeated many times over before the war ended. It is, however, an usual memorial in its recording of so much detail of the victims.

## FAULD CRATER EXPLOSION

In the late 1930s the Air Ministry needed to locate somewhere safe to store bombs for the RAF as part of wider preparations for war, a war which many realised would come sooner rather than later. The hills around Hanbury have been mined for gypsum and alabaster for centuries and had an extensive existing network of tunnels. As gypsum is an inert substance, the mines were an ideal place to store high explosives. The existing caverns were enlarged and reinforced with concrete, enough, it was thought, to withstand any blast.

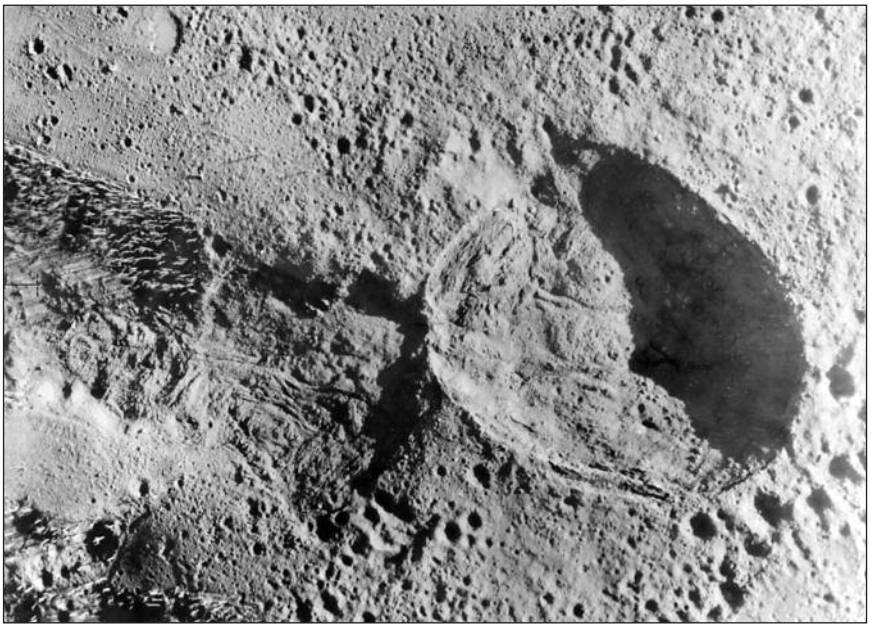
Hanbury, the nearest village, was situated well out into the countryside and was close to major rail networks, which made transportation of supplies and bombs relatively easy. RAF Fauld, as it became known, was eventually used not only as a bomb dump but also as a bomb repair depot. At first, safety procedures at the base were carefully monitored and administered. Strict guidelines included using only certain types of metal tools and wire wool. It has been well documented that, through the early 1940s as the war drew on, conditions at RAF Fauld deteriorated, as personnel changed and safety procedures slipped. The bomb-store conditions, by 1944, amounted to a disaster waiting to happen. Inadequate training and bad working conditions were tolerated. The Ministry of Labour and National Service were at the time experiencing difficulty in selecting persons for manual labour, as, of course, the most healthy, physically fit men from the area had already been called up to serve. Staffs were overworked and nearly 200 Italian POWs from a nearby camp were brought in to help. (As Italy had signed an armistice in May 1944, POWs were then members of a co-operating country.) In the months around D-Day in 1944, 20,000 tons of bombs were being moved in and out of the mines each month.

On November 27, 1944, just after 11 a.m., two explosions occurred, one small one, followed by one huge explosion. Many reasons have been suggested over time: perhaps the accident was caused by a worker using a brass tool, strictly forbidden and highly dangerous as it may have released a spark which in turn ignited the explosives. Theories ranged from this to the more ridiculous, that German fighter planes had been seen overhead and had bombed the area.

Whatever the cause of the accident, agreement is certain on the extent of the damage. The mine was large, with 22 miles of railway track within, with its caverns housing thousands of tons of high explosives. When the explosions happened, some of these bombs travelled two miles across the Staffordshire countryside. The mine was usually approached by two entrances, but these were both blocked with debris. The Principal Fire Officer, Mr Youll, wrote in his report of the incident that ordinary rescue efforts, such as tunnelling, were useless. A reservoir close to the mine had burst its defence walls in the explosion and the water had run into the mine. This created what was described by the Inspector General of the Ministry of Home Security, upon visiting the site on December 1, as 'a vast sea of mud'.

Eyewitness accounts of the event, and the hours immediately afterwards, were recorded and are now kept at the Public Record Office. Reports from the ARP controller and the Rescue Depot Superintendent at Burton on Trent, the nearest large town, and one of the ambulance drivers document confusion at the scene. Not only were the entrances to the mine blocked with debris, the roads to and from the mine were soon blocked with vehicles, making it virtually impossible to get casualties away from the scene without some difficulty.

Eventually, organisation of the site was undertaken by the military and what was described as a 'Security Silence' was imposed. Journalistic reporting of the event was delayed until as much information as possible had been passed to the Air Ministry.



**The disaster at RAF Fauld on November 27, 1944 was highlighted in *After the Battle* No. 18 published in 1977 but it was not until 1990 that moves were made to erect a memorial to those killed in the largest explosion to occur in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. (English Heritage/RAF)**

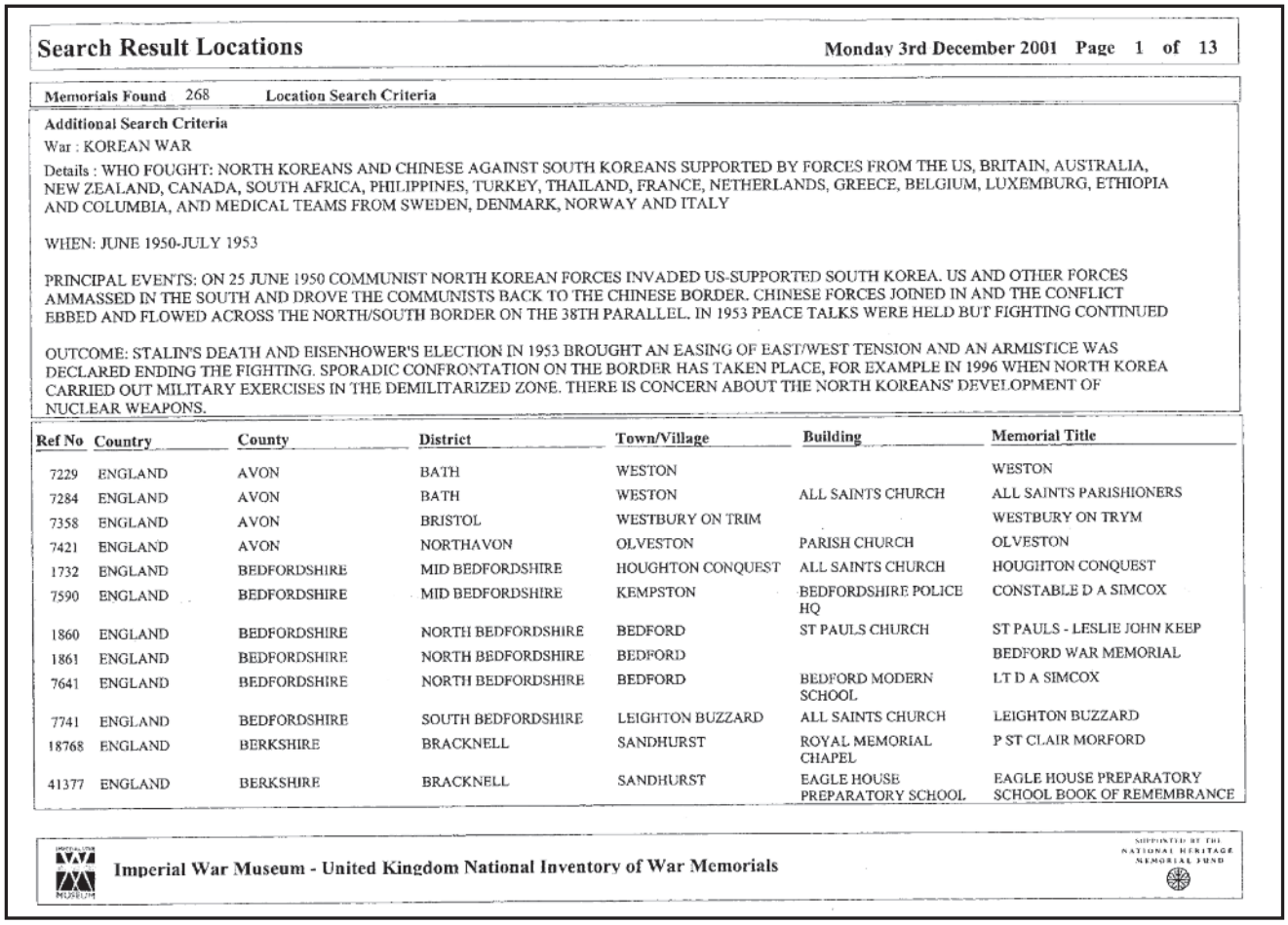
The devastation to the village of Hanbury and the surrounding area was immense. The topsoil from 1,000 acres of land had gone and was scattered throughout the countryside. Twenty-six men had died instantly in the blast, many more died above ground. The earth literally opened up and swallowed Upper Castle Hayes Farm and a cement works, situated just above the mine, taking the lives of farm owners Mr and Mrs Goodwin and more of the farm and cement workers. As the reservoir burst its dam wall, a further 27 men drowned when part of the mine was flooded. Further casualties still included some miners who had survived but been trapped when the blast initially occurred. As they made their way through the maze of tunnels, at least five succumbed to carbon-monoxide poisoning, as did a number of the rescue workers who arrived at the scene with no breathing apparatus.

Interestingly, the BBC issued an appeal to the general public for information on where the explosions had been audible. Those locations logged included Gosport and Worthing on the South coast, Criccieth near Pwhelli in North Wales, Gallashields in Scotland and Kingston upon Hull.

It has been said that the RAF Fauld explosion is a forgotten tragedy and indeed it is an event not often remarked upon. It is, in physicality if not in the psyche of a nation, one that changed the landscape of Britain. It is one which was initially suppressed, even subject to an official cover-up, much to the frustration of the local people who had to be content with a verdict of 'Accidental Death' for their loved ones.

The memorial (NIWM 13566), erected on the edge of the crater, is made of a rough-hewn block of Italian white granite, provided by the Italian government as a mark of respect for the victims, which of course included seven Italian POWs. Relatives and local people raised £2,000 to erect the memorial on the site, which was unveiled on November 27, 1990, 46 years after the event. Although a memorial hall was built in the village, the relatives of those killed in the explosion felt that a memorial on site, to those who had been killed in this one event, was appropriate. The memorial service was attended by around 400 people, including those who had travelled from Italy. The memorial carries 70 names in all, the first 18 of which are to those who have no known grave.

The site is now a nature reserve of sorts, with trees and plants growing there again after the earth recovered to the extent it could again support life. The local authorities tried for a number of years to convert the crater into a landfill rubbish site, but protests from local people reminded Staffordshire County Council that the crater was, in essence, a mass grave. Since the erection of the memorial, and possibly through subsequent coverage in the media, there has been an increased interest in this long forgotten episode in Britain's wartime history. It is a good example of how war memorials are still being erected to the same effect and to serve the same purpose as those erected soon after a time of conflict: that of remembrance and of recognition of a need for a physical focus for grief.



**Search Result Locations** Monday 3rd December 2001 Page 1 of 13

Memorials Found 268 Location Search Criteria

**Additional Search Criteria**

War : KOREAN WAR

Details : WHO FOUGHT: NORTH KOREANS AND CHINESE AGAINST SOUTH KOREANS SUPPORTED BY FORCES FROM THE US, BRITAIN, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, SOUTH AFRICA, PHILIPPINES, TURKEY, THAILAND, FRANCE, NETHERLANDS, GREECE, BELGIUM, LUXEMBURG, ETHIOPIA AND COLUMBIA, AND MEDICAL TEAMS FROM SWEDEN, DENMARK, NORWAY AND ITALY

WHEN: JUNE 1950-JULY 1953

PRINCIPAL EVENTS: ON 25 JUNE 1950 COMMUNIST NORTH KOREAN FORCES INVADED US-SUPPORTED SOUTH KOREA. US AND OTHER FORCES AMMASSED IN THE SOUTH AND DROVE THE COMMUNISTS BACK TO THE CHINESE BORDER. CHINESE FORCES JOINED IN AND THE CONFLICT EBBED AND FLOWED ACROSS THE NORTH/SOUTH BORDER ON THE 38TH PARALLEL. IN 1953 PEACE TALKS WERE HELD BUT FIGHTING CONTINUED

OUTCOME: STALIN'S DEATH AND EISENHOWER'S ELECTION IN 1953 BROUGHT AN EASING OF EAST/WEST TENSION AND AN ARMISTICE WAS DECLARED ENDING THE FIGHTING. SPORADIC CONFRONTATION ON THE BORDER HAS TAKEN PLACE, FOR EXAMPLE IN 1996 WHEN NORTH KOREA CARRIED OUT MILITARY EXERCISES IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE. THERE IS CONCERN ABOUT THE NORTH KOREANS' DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

| Ref No | Country | County | District | Town/Village | Building | Memorial Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7229 | ENGLAND | AVON | BATH | WESTON | | WESTON |
| 7284 | ENGLAND | AVON | BATH | WESTON | ALL SAINTS CHURCH | ALL SAINTS PARISHIONERS |
| 7358 | ENGLAND | AVON | BRISTOL | WESTBURY ON TRIM | | WESTBURY ON TRYM |
| 7421 | ENGLAND | AVON | NORTHAVON | OLVESTON | PARISH CHURCH | OLVESTON |
| 1732 | ENGLAND | BEDFORDSHIRE | MID BEDFORDSHIRE | HOUGHTON CONQUEST | ALL SAINTS CHURCH | HOUGHTON CONQUEST |
| 7590 | ENGLAND | BEDFORDSHIRE | MID BEDFORDSHIRE | KEMPSTON | BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE HQ | CONSTABLE D A SIMCOX |
| 1860 | ENGLAND | BEDFORDSHIRE | NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE | BEDFORD | ST PAULS CHURCH | ST PAULS - LESLIE JOHN KEEP |
| 1861 | ENGLAND | BEDFORDSHIRE | NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE | BEDFORD | | BEDFORD WAR MEMORIAL |
| 7641 | ENGLAND | BEDFORDSHIRE | NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE | BEDFORD | BEDFORD MODERN SCHOOL | LT D A SIMCOX |
| 7741 | ENGLAND | BEDFORDSHIRE | SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE | LEIGHTON BUZZARD | ALL SAINTS CHURCH | LEIGHTON BUZZARD |
| 18768 | ENGLAND | BERKSHIRE | BRACKNELL | SANDHURST | ROYAL MEMORIAL CHAPEL | P ST CLAIR MORFORD |
| 41377 | ENGLAND | BERKSHIRE | BRACKNELL | SANDHURST | EAGLE HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL | EAGLE HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE |

Imperial War Museum - United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials

SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL HERITAGE MEMORIAL FUND

## THE UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL INVENTORY OF WAR MEMORIALS

**Searches of the database can be called for using many different criteria. This is an excerpt from the report on all memorials commemorating the Korean War but equally one could have searched by artists, place, regiment, etc.**

In 1921 the Imperial War Museum appealed for photographs of war memorials but little attempt was made by any organisation to record the unparalleled programme of construction throughout the United Kingdom following the First World War. Over the years, as time took its toll, it became apparent that some memorials could disappear and that no comprehensive record existed.

On March 5, 1988, *The Times* published a letter from Dr Alan Borg, Director General of the Imperial War Museum at the time, pointing out that there was 'an urgent national requirement for an inventory of war memorials' as many were 'suffering from the ravages of time and pollution, with inscriptions becoming illegible and details of sculpture destroyed'.

Following an enthusiastic response, a meeting was convened at the museum on June 10, 1988 at which a number of representatives of organisations sharing Dr Borg's concerns agreed to the founding of the then 'National Inventory of War Memorials'. (In January 2001, to reflect the changed circumstances brought about by devolution, it was decided that the title of the project should be changed to the 'United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials', and appropriate heritage organisations from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were invited to join.)

From the outset a full-time project coordinator was seen as essential and in June 1989 Dr Catherine Moriarty was appointed to the post. Her task was to establish a recording system and to oversee the many volunteers contributing records. In conjunction with the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments in England (RCHME), Dr Moriarty devised a standard recording form for use by the wide range of volunteer field workers.

At the same time, work began on the development of a specialised computer database. The merits of various software packages were assessed by computer staff from IWM and RCHME and eventually Oracle was selected. As a relational database, Oracle enabled a series of reference tables to be used and the screens mirrored the recording forms. By the end of May 1990 the database was operational and recording forms were being returned in increasing numbers. The forms were often accompanied by photographs, newspaper cuttings and other ephemera. The Inventory was also presented with a number of independent surveys and other outstanding contributions such as three collections of vintage postcards, largely dating from the years immediately following the First World War, amassed by Graham Farthing, A. E. O. Carter and Jenny McWhirtter.

The aim of the Inventory was agreed as to record all physical objects in the United Kingdom created or installed to commemorate those who died as a result of military service. This did not include individual graves, the purpose of a memorial being defined as to reunite those who were separated by a conflict, who left their homes, colleagues and friends to serve in a war – many of whose bodies were never recovered or who were buried overseas.

Despite the temptation to attempt to include all names on the database, it was decided that this would be too large a task and beyond the capacity of the initial computer system and available man-power, although volunteers were encouraged to record the lists of names on memorials. Structured information was seen as the key to a successful inventory and the primary aim was to record the geographical location, the physical appearance and condition of the memorial. In addition, the Inventory hoped to discover the historical background – such as who designed, sculpted or constructed the memorials, how they were funded and who unveiled or dedicated them. The intention was to make the database available as a research tool to as wide a public as possible.

Dr Catherine Moriarty left the project in October 1996 and in December Nick Hewitt was appointed as co-ordinator. Under the chairmanship of Robert Crawford, who succeeded Dr Borg as Director-General in 1995, the IWM confirmed its long-term commitment to the project. As a result, the scale of the Inventory has grown considerably. The National Heritage Memorial Fund provided a generous lottery-funded grant to enable two additional full-time staff to be appointed and Lorraine Knight and Jane Armer joined the project in November 1997. With their arrival, the primary aim was to increase the speed of computerisation of the paper records, but with the team increased to three, plus office volunteers helping on each day of the week, many other areas of the project have been expanded.

The Inventory would not be possible without committed volunteers. Without their enthusiasm, nothing would have happened. Currently the number stands at over 450, spread throughout the United Kingdom. Strong links have been formed with many groups with an increasingly wide range of interests. Keeping in touch with the volunteers is essential in order to ensure the flow of information to the archive, to direct volunteers to under-represented areas and to let people know that, although based in London, the Inventory is a national project. A Newsletter is distributed four times a year,

**As one of the decisive conflicts of the Second World War was actually fought in the skies over the United Kingdom, inevitably the Battle of Britain features in a great number of memorials. One of the first to be unveiled after the war — by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder on January 11, 1949 — was the magnificent stained-glass window in the front hall of the Rolls-Royce factory at Derby dedicated 'to the pilots of the Royal Air Force who in the Battle of Britain, turned the work of our hands into the salvation of our country'. It was a marvellous occasion with guests arriving by special train from London. No. 620 (Rolls-Royce) Squadron ATC provided the Guard of Honour and music was played by the Rolls-Royce Works Band with a contribution from the Rolls-Royce Male Voice Choir. The memorable day ended with a conducted tour of the factory.**

which includes details of progress, as well as information on events and conferences where the Inventory has been represented.

The Inventory hopes, if funding can be found, to make information available on the Internet. Cintra, one of the leading companies in digital asset management, designed and manages the current system. The database was designed specifically for the Inventory and ensures that information can be manipulated and retrieved in many ways to suit the researcher. There is increasing use of the data on the Internet and enquiries for the Inventory are received by E-mail from all over the world.

As it has grown, the Inventory has become recognised as the pre-eminent source of information relating to war memorials in the UK and project staff are called upon to represent it in various ways, from addressing international conferences to speaking to local history groups or branches of the Western Front Association. Project staff and volunteers have been asked to contribute pieces in the local and national media as well as writing articles for specialist journals. Media interest always reaches a peak around the time of Remembrance Sunday in November. Volunteer field workers have often used their local newspapers and radio as a medium through which to appeal for further assistance, and so the flow of information is often reciprocal.

| Components | Materials | Condition |
|---|---|---|
| WINDOW | STAINED GLASS | GOOD |

| Ornamentation | Moved ? |
|---|---|
| IN THE CENTRE OF THE WINDOW IS A FIGHTER PILOT OF THE RAF READY FOR BATTLE. HE STANDS, WEARING FLYING BOOTS AND MAE WEST, HELMET IN HAND, ON THE SPINNER OF AN AIRSCREW, ITS THREE BLADES DOMINATING THE LOWER PART OF THE WINDOW. BEHIND IT, STRETCHED OUT IN LONG LINES, ARE THE BUILDINGS OF THE DERBY FACTORY. ABOVE AND BEHIND THE AIRMAN IS AN OUTSTRETCHED EAGLE. THE EAGLE IS FRAMED BY A RESPLENDENT SUN. | N |

| Date of Ceremony | Performed By |
|---|---|
| 11TH JANUARY 1949 | LORD TEDDER |
| 11TH JANUARY 1949 | BISHOP OF DERBY |
| SEPTEMBER 1996 | UNKNOWN |

| Sponsorship Type | Cost of Memorial |
|---|---|
| Did this include a role of honour ? | Where is it ? |

| Artist | Occupation |
|---|---|
| MESSRS HENDRA & HARPER | BUILDER |
| MR HUGH EASTON | DESIGNER |
| DENIS HARRIS | BUILDER |
| T G HARRIS | BUILDER |

**The Inventory records the details: designed by Hugh Easton with the help of Robert Hendra and Geoffrey Harper (NIWM 14202).**

**And the great majority of the airfields from which the RAF and the Allied air forces flew now have their own memorials. Some have been erected by squadron associations but, because so many of the wartime units no longer exist, many are the product of altruistic local enthusiasts. These are some recent additions. *Left:* The Detling Airfield Millenium Project Group led the way for this memorial to be unveiled in September 1998 to commemorate the airfield's long history from 1915 to 1945 (NIWM 43519). *Right:* Ross and Cromarty Enterprise 2001 joined forces with the Aircrew Association with help from the Novar Windfarm Community Fund to erect this memorial (NIWM 43726) beside the Cromarty Firth flying boat base at RAF Alness, formerly known as Invergordon. It was from here that the Duke of Kent left on his fatal flight to Iceland (see *After the Battle* No. 37), whose crash site memorial on Caithness is now inventorised as NIWM 6051.**

**The Kenley Tribute — a joint project by the Kenley and Caterham Branch of the RAF Association and the local residents' association — refurbished one of the blast pens on the western side of the airfield to site their memorial which was unveiled in August 2000 (NIWM 38916). It was from Kenley that Douglas Bader took off on the day which ended in the crash which was to cost him his legs (see *After the Battle* No. 35) and where he re-opened the Memorial Hall (NIWM 770) in 1975.**

**And at RAF North Weald, *After the Battle* sponsored a memorial to complement the existing granite obelisk (NIWM 43728) which had been unveiled by Princess Astrid of Norway in 1952 'in gratitude to the Royal Air Force, to the RAF station North Weald and to the people of the district'. The new memorial was dedicated on September 3, 2000 — the 60th anniversary of the heaviest German raid on the airfield. The new memorial (NIWM 43729) is unique in that copies of a printed Debt of Honour are always available from a bronze cabinet in the wall for visitors to take away with them. This lists the names of 262 airmen, women and civilians who lost their lives while serving at North Weald, from whatever cause, in peace and in war, from 1916 when the airfield first opened to when the RAF departed in 1964.**

**'Unique' however, is a word which could really be used to describe every single memorial, as all are different in their own way, but the Stanier '8F' has to be in a class of its own, as Britain's only working memorial locomotive! It was built in Glasgow in 1940 and given the LMS number 8233 before being sent with over 140 similar engines for military duty in Persia. After the war she served in Palestine and the Canal Zone before being sold to British Railways in 1957 (where she was given a new number 48773). When BR decided to phase out steam, 8233 was bought by the Stanier 8F Locomotive Society which decided that she would form an appropriate memorial to the men of the military railway units of the Royal Engineers and she was so dedicated at Highley Station on September 27, 1986 (NIWM 40116). The society now want to take this a stage further with the compilation of a Book of Remembrance recording the names of over 300 military railwaymen who lost their lives while serving with the Corps of Royal Engineers.**

The launch of the UK National Inventory of War Memorials to the public in November 2001 brought to completion the tremendous efforts of the staff and volunteers. A new phase began, making available the information which has been collected and answering the widening range of enquiries about the nation's memorials.

At time of writing, the archive and database contain records relating to around 45,000 war memorials, but field work still continues and new material arrives at the project office on a daily basis. It is interesting to note that new memorials have been erected more frequently in recent years than at any time since the end of the Second World War. Thus, it remains important for the Inventory to continue its work of recording and maintaining an up-to-date picture. Readers of *After the Battle* who are interested in becoming involved with the project would be advised to contact the office at the address below before commencing any recording work as with around 45,000

**During Angela Raby's work on *The Forgotten Service*, which we published in November 1999, she felt that it was important that recognition be given to the largely forgotten volunteer ambulance drivers who served in the London Auxiliary Ambulance Service during the 1939-45 war. Her research had concentrated on Station 39 which had been located in Weymouth Mews** *(above left)* **where her aunt had been the senior officer and which was largely unchanged since wartime days.** *Right:* **After much hard work the great day — June 13, 2001 — dawned when the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Harvey Marshall greeted her at the entrance to the mews for the unveiling of an official green plaque (NIWM 43727).**

**Memorials come . . . and memorials go. What is revered by one generation is sometimes all too soon overlooked — yet missing memorials are also noted on the database. On December 13, 1940 a bomb disposal squad under Captain Michael Blaney was blown to pieces where the bomb they were defusing detonated as it was hoisted from the excavation at Manor Park, London (see *After the Battle* No. 3, page 43). Terence Trimmer remembers that day: 'I witnessed the explosion when the UXB blew up at 590 Romford Road that Friday. My mother, Mrs Bertha Trimmer, was injured by the explosion when returning home from shopping. My sister, who was six years of age and myself — I was only eight — were with her. The road had been cordoned off at the junction with Salisbury School, adjacent to the site of the UXB. We lived at 22 Manor Park Road so had to make a detour to get home and as we approached our house from the opposite end of the street there was a tremendous explosion. Dust and debris hurtled towards us and black smoke filled the air; we were only some 500 yards away from the centre of the explosion. My mother suddenly collapsed onto the pavement as my sister and I watched in utter bewilderment. I noticed there was blood on the pavement but did not realise my mother had been struck in the leg by a piece of shrapnel. Some neighbours came to help us. Mother was put onto a stretcher and later taken to Aldersbrook Hospital at Wanstead. My father was serving in the Royal Navy but fortunately his ship was in port and somehow a message was sent to him. He obtained compassionate leave and came home to make arrangements for our care. I have never forgotten this terrible incident nor have I forgotten, on the following day, noticing a soldier's metal button embedded in the door frame of the off-licence opposite the bomb site.'** *Left:* **After the war, the County Borough of East Ham named a street on a new estate Blaney Crescent where the Royal Engineers (Bomb Disposal) Old Comrades' Association erected a memorial (NIWM 43730) to the nine men killed (a police officer standing on the opposite side of the road also lost his life).** *Right:* **However, when we went to photograph it during our research for *The East End Then and Now* we were horrified to discover that it had been demolished.**

memorials already surveyed, field work is now really an exercise in filling gaps and there is a very real risk of duplicated effort.

The database is available for public consultation by appointment (0207 416 5344) in the Reading Rooms of the Imperial War Museum Department of Printed Books. A variety of searches can be carried out including:

a) Simple lists of all memorials in a given geographical area.
b) Memorials related to specific wars or religious denominations.
c) Those unveiled by particular individuals or in certain years.
d) Memorials which were the work of particular artists.
e) Particular memorial types or materials used and their present condition, or any combination of the above criteria.
f) A detailed report for a specific memorial.

Not all of the material submitted to the archive has been suitable for assimilation on to the Inventory database, so researchers are welcome to visit the project office by appointment, Monday to Friday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Here they can access the original survey forms completed by field workers, the project's small library of locally published commemorative books, a number of unpublished research projects, and the three collections of war memorial postcards.

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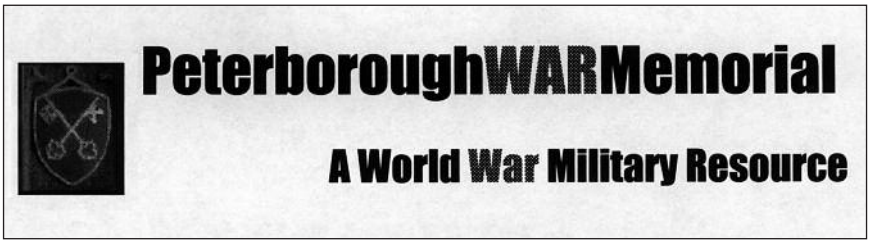
website: www.iwm.org.uk
E-mail: memorials@iwm.org.uk.

**Robert Strong, Chairman of the local branch of the Royal British Legion, was equally horrified when he read the account and he set the wheels in motion for a memorial plaque (NIWM 43731) to be erected at the scene of the explosion. It was unveiled on May 10, 2001 by the Mayor of the London Borough of Newham, Councillor Bryan Collier. Here, Robert tells the children of Salisbury Road School what happened. Behind the railings on the left stands the original Air Raid Precautions post, and the old school air raid shelters, which had been built in the playground.**

**And when is a memorial not a memorial? In the sense that we normally look for a tangible object when thinking of memorialisation, Peterborough, despite being a sizeable city and the largest in north Cambridgeshire, has no formal war memorial . . . that is until David Gray set up his memorial website in cyberspace! 'Well over 1,000 men from Peterborough were killed in the First World War', says David, 'and there is no memorial recording their names. The only list has been held in Peterborough Memorial Hospital (NIWM 8482) but this is incomplete.'**




**'The website (www.pboro-memorial.com) is my attempt to record those people in full on a memorial for all to see.'**

1940
1945
NORSKE RYPERE
I STORBRITANNIA
REISTE STEINEN

1940
1945
NORSKE RYPERE
I STORBRITANNIA
REISTE STEINEN